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AN EXCURSION
TO
THE MAMMOTH CAVE,
AND THE
BARRENS OF KENTUCKY.
WITH SOME NOTICES OF
THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE STATE.

BY THE
REV. R. DAVIDSON.

LEXINGTON, KY.

A. T. SKILLMAN & SON.

1840.

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TO THE
REV. ALEXANDER M'CLELLAND, D. D.

AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,
TO BE MEASURED NOT BY ITS WORTH, BUT BY ITS
SINCERITY,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME
'S RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS FORMER PUPIL,
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

It has long been the fashion to apologize for authorship ; a practice at once superfluous, and open to the charge of mock-modesty. It is superfluous ; because the public will examine and judge for themselves, and their opinion will neither be forestalled nor propitiated by prefatory confessions. It is, in addition, open to the charge of mock-modesty ; because no man should ask the community to read what he acknowledges is not worth reading ; while, on the other hand, the fact of his publishing is a proof that his real and ostensible opinion differ.

These gentlemen would be very indignant, were the public to take them at their word ; as Swift once treated a lady who

was profuse in apologies for her dinner. This was over-done, and that was under-done, and she lamented there was nothing fit to eat. "If that be the case," cried the testy Dean, "I'll e'en go home, and dine on a herring." Doubtless our apologizing authors would resent acquiescence, and appeal in a towering passion, with Fielding, to Prince Posterity.

The trick savours somewhat of coquetry, like the stratagem of Galatea, who hit her swain with an apple, and then hid behind the willows, but not till she had first allowed him to get a glimpse of her in her flight;

"Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit antè videri."

Such literary coquetry never deceives; nor can he who employs it succeed in his object, of beguiling the public into a high opinion, not only of his merit, but of his modesty also.

The second of the two essays in this little volume, is a compilation of gleanings; some of them never before published,

and others newly arranged from various scattered sources, which, it is hoped may prove interesting to others, as well as to the writer.

As for the first, it is readily acknowledged to be not unlike the famous treatise written by somebody, "*de omnibus rebus, et quibusdam aliis*;" about every thing in the world, and a little besides. It was originally designed to furnish an hour's rational entertainment to an intelligent auditory, and if the public can derive any amusement from it, in its present form, they are heartily welcome.

Should the more critical feel disposed to censure, I must only take refuge with the ingenious Montaigne, and borrow his vindication of the "*leaps and skips*," with which his amusing volumes abound. With him, I must justify my rambles by the example of Plato, one of whose dialogues began with love and ended with rhetoric, and that of Plutarch,—high authorities, surely!—whose argument is stuffed with foreign matter, and is found only by acci-

dent. "How beautiful," says he, "are his variations and frolicksome sallies, and then, most of all, when they seem to be fortuitous and introduced for want of heed. 'Tis the inattentive reader that loses my subject and not I; there will always be found some phrase or other in a corner that is to the purpose, though it lie very close."*

The following Essays were originally read before two literary associations connected with the University of Transylvania, and were prepared in the intervals of professional duty. This statement will account for certain obvious peculiarities in the general structure, and occasionally in the language of both. Their publication having been requested, the writer has chosen the present as the most suitable form in which they shall appear. If the judgment of the public approve the step, he will not regret his determination; should it be otherwise, he has only to hope that

* Montaigne's Essays, vol. iii. p. 279.

at some future time, not far remote, he may succeed better in meriting attention, by a work of a graver and more solid nature, which he is now preparing for the press, and which, he trusts, will not be wanting in interest to the ecclesiastical antiquarian.

AN EXCURSION
TO
THE MAMMOTH CAVE
AND
THE BARRENS OF KENTUCKY.

READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF ADELPHI
OF TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY,

JANUARY 16, 1840.

EXCURSION, ETC.

Green River—Henderson—Tobacco trade—Colonel Henderson—Legend of Harpe's Head—Hopkinsville—Elkton—Education—Cumberland College—Russellville—Distinguished Citizens—Shakertown—Bowling-Green—Internal Improvement—The Barrens—Flora—Mineral resources—Coal Basins—Cavernous limestone—Similarity to the geology of Palestine—Sinks—River Cliffs—Illustration from Rokeby—Action of water—Examples—The Mammoth Cave—Name—Temperature—Saltpetre—Anecdote—Freaks of Nature—The Haunted Chamber—Indian Mummies—Bat Room—Cascade—Grotto—The River—White Fish—The Dome—The Bottomless Pit—The Zodiac—Star-Chamber—The Temple—Project of a hotel and omnibus discussed—Enthusiastic Visitor—Exit—Exhilaration—Dreams—The group of travellers—The White Cave—Gothic screenwork—The Organ—Laon's Fount—Stalactites—Concluding remarks—Love of nature cultivated by Europeans—Its pleasures—The sentiments awakened—The sentiment of infinity—St. Pierre—Stanzas from Burns.

HAVING occasion last fall to visit the Green River country, the writer of this article

gleaned various items of information during the excursion, which seemed to him of sufficient interest to be recorded. The narrative has indeed swelled to a formidable size, but it is hoped its length will not be found wearisome. One thing must be premised, that as no notes were taken at the time, but all was committed to paper from subsequent recollection, there will probably be a few inaccuracies; none, however, it is believed, of importance.

It was in the early part of October, 1836, that we first set foot in this interesting region. We landed a few miles below the mouth of Green River—so called in honour of the Hero of Eutaw. If this philological account be correct, as we were informed it was, and as is corroborated by the fact that the original settlers of this section were chiefly from North Carolina, then our modern usage of omitting the final “e” in the name, frustrates this well-meant intention of commemorating a distinguished patriot. The present orthography creates the impression that the

river owes its name to the greenish tints of its singularly beautiful and pellucid waters, rather than to the admiration of a hero.

The town of *Henderson*, at which we landed, is one hundred miles below Louisville, in a direct line, but owing to the windings of the Ohio, just double that distance by water. At this place we spent a day very agreeably, and from the acquaintances we made, we judged the people to be intelligent, frank and hospitable.

Henderson is a place of some age, but of a very unprepossessing appearance. This, we were informed, was owing to the circumstance that the land was held up by half a dozen wealthy individuals, who being urged by no necessity of fortune, refused either to sell or to improve. The consequence was, that while a few merchants could realize a handsome income, enterprise and population were checked. The great staple of the interior is tobacco, and Henderson is the principal point from which it is annually shipped for

Liverpool and other ports. At from sixty to one hundred and twenty dollars per hogshead, this branch of commerce must yield a profitable return.

Henderson is the county seat of Henderson County, and is so named in honour of Colonel Henderson, a man of uncommon sagacity, talents, and ambition, who about 1773 projected a proprietary government, in the southern half of Kentucky, with himself for its head, and actually convened a provincial assembly in that capacity. The State of Virginia, alarmed at his strides, stripped him of his authority, but indemnified him for his services as a pioneer, by a grant of two hundred thousand acres, or twelve miles square, in the locality of which we have been speaking.*

As there was no mail-coach running on our route, we hired a barouche, at a very reasonable rate, and started in a due south direction.

About twenty miles from Henderson we

* See more on this subject, page 93.

passed a lonely spot called *Harpe's Head*, and so laid down on the maps. The legend from which this spot has received its appellation is a truly bloody border tale, and has furnished a fine field of romance to that popular and sprightly writer, Judge Hall. Never having read his work, I shall narrate the legend as I received it from gentlemen who had seen the heroes of the tale.

It was about the beginning of the present century, or something less than forty years ago, that a couple of desperadoes of the name of Harpe, from North Carolina, broke from the jail at Danville, where they had been imprisoned for homicide. Accompanied each by a woman who passed for his wife, they fled into the southwestern section of the state. One, from his superior size, was called Big Harpe, while his brother was known as the Little Harpe. They seemed inspired with the deadliest hatred against the whole human race, in revenge, as was supposed, for their imprisonment. Such was their

implacable misanthropy, that they were known to kill where there was no temptation to rob. One of their victims was a little girl, found by herself at some distance from home, whose tender age and helplessness would have been her protection with any but incarnate fiends. Their steps were marked in rapine and blood as they passed through the country. The last dreadful act of barbarity they committed was this.

Assuming the guise of Methodist preachers, they obtained lodgings one night at a house on the road. Stagall, the master of the house, was absent, but they found his wife and children, and a stranger who, like themselves, had stopped for the night. Here they conversed, and made inquiries, incognito, about the two noted Harpes, who were represented as prowling about the country. When they retired to rest, they contrived to secure an axe, which they carried with them into their chamber. In the dead of night, they crept softly down stairs, and assassinated the whole

family, together with the stranger, in their sleep, whose only fault was having probably expressed their opinions freely about their characters ; and then, setting fire to the house, escaped.

As soon as the horrid affair was known, a party of armed men, with Stagall at their head, started in hot pursuit, and at length overtook them. The women they found attending to their little camp by the roadside ; the Harpes having gone aside into the woods to shoot an unfortunate traveller, of the name of Smith, that had fallen into their hands, as the women, less cruel than they, had begged that they would not despatch him before their eyes. It was this halt that enabled the pursuers to overtake them. The women immediately gave the alarm, and the miscreants fled in separate directions. The little Harpe, being the lightest, succeeded in effecting his escape, and never appeared in the neighbourhood again, although he was afterwards reported to be lurking further south. Big Harpe, refusing to stop when hailed,

Leiper, the foremost of the pursuers, raised his rifle, and shot him down. He dropped from his horse wounded, and when surrounded by the men, protested against violence, and demanded to be taken before a legal tribunal, that he might have justice. "Justice, villain!" shouted the enraged Stagall, his eyes flashing vengeance, "you shall have such justice as you showed my wife and children!" then, drawing out his hunting knife, he buried it in his heart, and not content with that, cut off his head. The head was then set upon a stake, which was planted where three roads met—the roads from Henderson, Morganfield, and Hopkinsville; so that the traveller from any point, as he emerged from the obscurity of the grove, was met by the appalling spectacle of a human head, festering in corruption, and dripping in its gore.

From this circumstance the spot has ever since gone by the name of *Harpe's Head*.

The women were apprehended and examined, but nothing appeared in evidence

positively against them, and they were dismissed. As it was believed that their influence, so far from encouraging, had been exerted to restrain the cruelty of the Harpes, popular prejudice soon turned in their favour; and as they were not destitute of personal attractions, they were afterwards married, together with a sister, who accompanied them, and their posterity are probably now living in the neighbourhood of Russellville.

As for Stagall, he had never borne a good character, and his excessive zeal and forwardness created new suspicions against him as an accomplice of Harpe; whom he might wish effectually to prevent from betraying him, by a precipitate death under colour of vengeance. - From this time his brow grew darker, and his habits more reckless, and he was at last shot over his cups by some one who had a grudge against him.

From this place to Hopkinsville, the country was very broken and stony, the land seemed inferior, and the corn dwinned

dled under excessive drought. Such was the scarcity of water, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could procure a scanty supply for our horses. The drought was protracted and severe in all parts of the state during the last summer, but especially in this section.

After two days of very unpleasant travelling, during which we passed over only about seventy miles, we reached *Hopkinsville*. Here we spent a week very agreeably, enjoying the warm hospitalities of a society uncommonly friendly, unsophisticated, and sincere.

Indeed, during our whole excursion, we were treated with a uniform and hearty kindness, that prevented us from feeling the embarrassment natural to strangers, and which we should be most ungrateful not to acknowledge with delight, and cherish in vivid remembrance. Those friends in particular, who received us with open arms at *Hopkinsville*, and whose company we shared in circumstances of unusual interest, unnecessary to be men-

tioned here, we shall ever "wear in our heart's core," and fondly indulge the hope of a reunion in some propitious hour.

Hopkinsville is a very beautiful country-seat of about twelve hundred inhabitants; and contains a handsome new courthouse, the architecture of which is in very good taste; and several small but neat churches, two of which are furnished with organs, a degree of refinement very rare as well as very unpopular in Kentucky. Hopkinsville reminded me of ancient Babylon, the circuit of which was said to be about sixty miles; for which geographers have accounted by supposing that much of the space was taken up with gardens. So in this place some of the best houses are scattered at intervals round the edge of the town, and these suburban villas being often quite ornamental in their style of building, and surrounded with trees and gardens, the appearance is very agreeable. Yet, even here, candour obliges us to add, a jealous agrarian might scent the incipient germs

of aristocracy, and shudder to find an anti-republican "*West End*," known by the suspicious title of *Quality Hill*.

The trade of Christian County, of which this is the chief town, is considerable, consisting of exports of tobacco, hogs, &c., amounting to several hundred thousand dollars annually.

Leaving Hopkinsville with regret, we passed through the pretty little village of *Elkton*.

Elkton contains a flourishing female academy. This leads me to remark, that the indications of an anxiety to secure the benefits of a competent education in this section of the State, are very obvious and gratifying, and speak well for the tone of public feeling. Cumberland College at Princeton, was represented to be under the care of able men, and to be attended by a respectable number of students. In addition to this, it may be stated, that according to the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, just published, it appears that one-fourth of the

counties that are districted, or nearly so, lie in the Green River country.

At *Russellville*, where we stopped for the night, we were agreeably surprised by a fresh instance of Green River hospitality, anticipating our arrival; and in the enjoyment of conversation, highly piquant and interesting, the hours wore pleasantly away. *Russellville*, though now eclipsed by *Bowling-Green*, was once the *Lexington* of Green River. Although, like *Bethlehem*, "little among the thousands of *Judah*, yet out of it have come Governors to rule the people." The number of distinguished citizens who have begun but not ended their political career in *Russellville* is remarkable.

The kindness of my esteemed friend, the postmaster of this city, has enabled me to furnish the following list, comprising six governors, two attorney generals, a chief justice, &c.

Ninian Edwards, governor of *Illinois*:

Robert Crittenden, (acting) governor of *Arkansas*:

J. Breathitt, governor of Kentucky.
 Jas. T. Morehead, do.
 A. M'Lean, governor of Illinois.
 Richard Call, governor of Florida.
 John J. Crittenden, United States Senator.
 George M. Bibb, Chief Justice.
 Col. Anthony Butler, Chargé to Mexico.
 Solomon P. Sharp, Attorney-General.
 Charles Morehead, do.
 Frank Johnson, member of Congress.
 Judge Ewing, Supreme Court, Kentucky.
 Joseph E. Davis, do. Miss.
 James Boyle, major-general, U. S. Army.
 D. M'Reynolds, surgeon-general, do.

To these distinguished citizens of Russellville, I will take the liberty of adding, (though at the risk of offending his modesty, and of being called to an account for violating his express entreaties to the contrary,) the name of our worthy fellow-townsmen, Joseph Ficklin, Esq., formerly Consul at St. Bart, S. A. and now the oldest, and probably most influential postmaster in the West.

The next day we passed through *Sha-*

kertown, just midway on the road between Russellville and Bowling-Green. Like all their establishments, it was neat, orderly, and quiet; but much inferior in extent and beauty to the Shaker village on the Kentucky river, which can boast some very imposing edifices. Although the Shaker community keeps up its numbers by reinforcements of adults disgusted with the world, or driven by poverty to seek a friendly asylum; and by poor children and orphans, whom they get into their hands in various ways, it is more than suspected by those who have the opportunity of knowing, that the old fanatical delusion exercises but a small influence upon their minds. Few of them are now believers in Ann Lee, and they have unhappily, though naturally enough, become a set of infidels. Whether their having given up of late years, their evening dances, is to be considered as indicating a decay of zeal, we shall not undertake to decide. The Shaker community have lost several of their proselytes within a

few years; some have been expelled for practices little becoming the vow of celibacy. One of their head men left them to mingle with "the world's people;"—while another crafty fox went off to try a new experiment, of "living for ever." What success he has met with, or whether, as in the case of his partner, it has already terminated through want of "*Faith*," I am unable to state; but if it has not proved more successful than his attempt to wheedle Congress out of a grant of land, in fee simple for ever, it is to be feared he is beyond the reach either of our indignation or contempt.

Bowling-Green is a thriving and handsome town, which has very flattering prospects opening before it. A broad and elegant turnpike is in progress, connecting it with Louisville, and another connecting it with Lexington and Nashville; and in addition to this, preparations for slack-water navigation are going on to completion, connecting the waters of Big Barren, which skirts the town, with those of Green

River. Through these new channels, produce of various kinds can easily find a market, while merchandize will be more cheaply imported from distant quarters.

Being now in the heart of the *Barrens*, and in the vicinity of the celebrated *Mammoth Cave*, an extended description of this curious region, both geological and topographical, may be considered neither inappropriate nor devoid of interest.

The Mammoth Cave, is situated in the southeastern corner of Edmondson County, twenty-four miles from Bowling-Green, and about half a mile from the southern shore of Green River. This locality forms part of that extensive region called the *Barrens of Kentucky*, reaching from the Tennessee line to the Rolling Fork of Salt River, and embracing a large portion of the Green River country. This tract, extending over several counties, was originally styled the *Barrens*, not from any sterility of soil, for although the soil is not of the first quality, it is generally good; but because it was a kind of rolling prairie,

destitute of timber. While the central parts of the State were covered with forests of heavy timber, or overspread with tall canebrakes,* the Barrens, with the exception of a few scattered groves along the water-courses, were clothed with a thick growth of prairie grass. The face of the country, however, presented great attractions to the botanist. With what enthusiasm have I heard the late Professor of Botany, in Transylvania,† descant on the topic.

“In many a long and solitary ride through the Barrens of Kentucky,” said he, has my labour been lightened and my spirits cheered, by the floral varieties of that interesting region. Here in one spot the ground was carpeted with the flame-coloured flowers of the *Euchroma*, and

* Sir Walter Scott, with his usual felicitous description, has hit it off in a single line of Marmion,

“Kentucky’s wood-encumbered brake.”

† Charles W. Short, M. D. now of Louisville; a gentleman who is as estimable in private life, as he is eminent in his favourite walk of science.

there enamelled with the party-coloured blossoms of violets and trilliums. In this spot, from amidst a tuft of humbler beauties, the majestic *Frazera* shot up its pyramidal head, crowned with wreaths of its peculiar beauties, and on that, various *sumachs* overhung the path, emitting from their clumps of fruit, a shower of acid on the traveller. Here at one point, would burst upon the view a sheet of water skirted with the numerous bright blue petals of the *pondeteria* and *decodon*, and covered over with the purple flowers of the *cyanus*; and then, at another was stretched before the eye a waving sea of gigantic grasses. In such a scene as this," continued the enthusiastic naturalist, "none but a recreant to nature, and undeserving its pleasures, could remain indifferent to the charms spread in such lavish profusion around."

The destitution of timber in the Barrens was owing to the frequent burning of the prairie by hunters to drive out the game, by which means the young and tender

shoots were scorched and destroyed. The effect is still witnessed in the great prairies of the West, which are annually swept by prairie fires, and in which no trees are to be found, except in such wet grounds as could defy the progress of the flames. With the advancing settlement of the country, the prairie fires were gradually extinguished, and the young timber had liberty to grow. The consequence is, that tracts which were destitute of shade ten or twenty years since, are now covered with extensive forests of *Black Jack*, or scrub oak, an inferior wood indeed, yet capable of being converted to various uses, and which will no doubt be succeeded in time by some more valuable growth.

To the traveller in the fall of the year, the unvaried and monotonous drab of the foliage presents an extremely dull and dreary aspect, and an agreeable sensation of relief is experienced when he makes a transition to the brighter hues of green edged with yellow, of the beech woods.

The first settlers preferred the hilly or knobby region, although inferior land, on account of the advantages of wood and water; but after the grant of the Legislature in 1800, of four hundred acres of land to every actual settler, many were allured to occupy the open country. Since that period, owing to the healthiness of the climate, the fine range for cattle, the facilities for raising swine, the culture of tobacco; and the growth and preservation of timber, the reason of the appellation "*Barrens*" is to be learned from the antiquarian alone. MacAdam roads and slackwater navigation, are giving a new impulse to the trade and prosperity of this section of Kentucky; and the valley of Green River, with its handsome and thriving towns, is rising every year in political importance, while it attracts the admiration of the traveller. To say nothing of the lucrative tobacco trade, nor of the trade to the South in live-stock, the *mineral treasures* of this region when fully developed, will constitute an inexhaustible

source of wealth. There are two great *coal basins* in the valley of the Ohio, one connected with the Upper Ohio, covering part of Ohio, the western part of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, and seven thousand square miles of the eastern section of Kentucky, according to Mr. Mather's Reports, to which I acknowledge myself largely indebted. The coal formation of the lower Ohio embraces the valley of the Wabash in Indiana, and is continued into Kentucky; extending through a dozen counties up the valley of Green River, from Henderson to the vicinity of the Mammoth Cave. A brief account of the geological structure of this section, will at once present a clear view of these extensive mineral resources, and throw light upon the origin and formation of the great caves which abound there.

It is familiar to all that the soil of Kentucky rests on a basis of limestone, but it may not be so well known, that the character of this limestone basis varies in the central and southern portions of the state.

In the central portion, the rocky strata lie in a solid and more slaty mass, and abound in fossils, marine shells, organic remains, bones of the mastodon, &c. This kind of rock is denominated *great limestone*, from its being found under a great area of the western country. The soil lies upon it to the depth of a dozen feet, and a portion of the lime and slate being dissolved with the soil, imparts that warm and forcing quality to which the vegetation owes its vigour and luxuriance, and the delightful region itself the title by which it is known over the world, as "*the Garden of Kentucky*."

The rocky strata, on the other hand, which lie beneath the Barrens of Kentucky, and whose general limits are nearly coincident with the limits of the Barrens, occupy altogether an area of from five thousand to eight thousand square miles, are less slaty as a mass, less fossiliferous, and of the kind called *cavernous limestone*.* Like the

* A striking geological resemblance between Kentucky and Palestine, the Valley of Virginia, and the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, has been noticed

substratum of Florida, it contains many subterranean hollows, into which the streams often sink, and after flowing some

by that accurate and observant traveller, Mr. Paxton, whose work displays throughout the happy application of his favourite science. There is an additional feature of resemblance which may be very properly mentioned in connection with our subject, viz. the frequent occurrence of the *cavernous* limestone. It occurs nowhere but in this transition or flötz formation. The Valley of Virginia is famous for its caves, Weyer's in particular. In the vicinity of Carlisle in the Cumberland Valley, the writer has visited a cave whose windings are of considerable and unknown extent; while in another direction is found a depression of the earth's surface, called "the Devil's Punchbowl," of the same nature as the sinkholes of Kentucky. As for Palestine, much of it is mountainous and abounds in caves, some of them very capacious. That of Engedi, or the Fountain of the Goats, was sufficiently ample to conceal David and his six hundred men in its inner recesses, while Saul laid down to rest within the cave's mouth, utterly unconscious of his danger.

Mr. Paxton's remarks are as follows. "In passing over it, (Palestine,) I am almost perpetually reminded of Kentucky, and some parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania, especially the limestone district in the Valley. All who have travelled in Virginia know, that the Valley of Virginia is, in many respects, the most

distance under ground, emerge at another point. The *sinkholes*, as they are called, are not the least remarkable curiosities of this

valuable part of that State ; that in many places there is much rock on the surface, and that on some farms whole acres are rendered nearly useless by the washing away of the earth which covered the face of the rock. If it is thus in one hundred years, what will it be in four thousand ? But it more especially reminds me of Kentucky. Both countries are based upon a limestone rock, which is horizontal, and crops out perpetually at the sides of the hills. In Kentucky we already see many places where the soil is all gone. Not long before leaving America, I visited one of the first settlers in that state, who resides near Danville, (Col. Joseph M'Dowell.) I noticed large masses of rock near his house several feet above the ground, and asked him if those rocks were thus naked when he settled there. 'No, no,' said he, 'not one of them was to be seen for long afterwards.' It would now take two, possibly three feet of earth to cover those rocks, as they were when he first settled there. I have put a similar question to other persons, and found that in many parts of the State, two or three feet of earth have somehow disappeared from the surface. If the same process goes on for five hundred years, Kentucky will, in many places, show as much naked rock as is now seen in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem or Jerusalem ; and what would it be in four thousand years ? But

region. They are of a circular shape, and a number of yards in diameter, shelving down to the centre with a gentle declivity, and supposed to owe their origin to the undermining action of subjacent water. One of these *sinks* is within a short distance of Bowling-Green; from one side of which bursts a stream, which after traversing the bottom is engulfed in the opposite side. The current is of sufficient force to turn an undershot wheel, to which utilitarian purpose it has been applied; and the sight of a mill in so strange a place is an amusing spectacle.

We may ascribe not only these sinks, but also the cliffs and caves, which confer so much of the wild, romantic, and pic-

will it follow, when the rock thus takes possession of the surface, that old Kentucky, as her sons love to call her, was not, when first settled, and is not now one of the first countries in the world? The more I see of Palestine, the more I am persuaded that *it* was once one of the first countries in the world. The time was, I doubt not, when all these rocks were covered with a fine vegetable mould.”—*Paxton’s Letters on Palestine*, p. 181.

turesque upon various parts of Kentucky, to the powerful agency of water. The character of the rivers and torrents is rapid and impetuous, while the geological formation of the country through which these rivers rush is limestone, in some places diversified with sandstone, in others with slate. As a natural consequence, the erosive action of running water has everywhere worn deep and narrow channels, easily fordable in the dry season, but formidable in the spring and winter from the swollen currents that sweep rapidly along. It is to the long continued and powerful actions of the streams we owe, as is universally admitted, the noble cliffs of the Kentucky, the Dick, and the Cumberland rivers. These grand mural escarpments challenge the most enthusiastic admiration from every eye. The cliffs of Kentucky, at the mouth of Hickman, in consequence of lying on a travelled road, have been seen and extolled by numbers, but the cliffs of Dick's river, which are approached by a less frequented path, and are therefore

less noted, are not inferior in wild and romantic grandeur. Widening into a stupendous amphitheatre of blue limestone, they rise perpendicularly to the height of three hundred feet, fringed upon the summit with cedars and other evergreens, while the graceful *Virgilia* decorates the face of the cliffs with its long pendant racemes of snow-white flowers. Standing upon the brink, which you suddenly approach before you are aware, you behold the blue and rocky rampart fronting you, while at a distance of several hundred feet below, you catch a glimpse of the winding stream with a mill-seat on its bank. You descend the ravine by one of those rude and sloping paths along the side of the precipitous cliff, which are said to have been originally trodden out by the numerous herds of buffalo. Arrived in safety at the bottom, thanks to your surefooted steed, you gaze upward in awe at the huge frowning rampart that encloses you on every side, lost in wonder at the rude magnificence of nature. Having digressed

so far already, I shall be indulged in quoting a passage from the second canto of *Rokeby*, that contains a beautiful description of the glen through which the Greta passes near its junction with the Tees, and is strikingly applicable to the scenery of which we are speaking.

"Sinking 'mid Greta's thickets deep,
 A mild and darker course they keep,
 A stern and lone, yet lovely road
 As e'er the foot of minstrel trod!
 Broad shadows o'er their passage fell;
 Deeper and narrower grew the dell;
 It seem'd some mountain, rent and riven,
 A channel for the stream had given
 So high the cliffs of limestone gray,
 Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
 Yielding, along their rugged base,
 A flinty footpath's niggard space;
 Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
 May hear the headlong torrent rave,
 And like a steed in frantic fit,
 That flings the froth from curb and bit,
 May view her chafe her waves and spray
 O'er every rock that bars her way,
 Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
 Thick as the schemes of human pride

That down life's current drive amain—
As frail, as frothy, and as vain!

“The cliffs that rear their haughty head
High o'er the river's darksome bed,
Were now all naked, wild, and gray,
Now waving all with greenwood spray;
Here trees to every crevice clung,
And o'er the dell their branches hung;
And there, all splinter'd and uneven,
The shiver'd rocks ascend to heaven.
Oft too the ivy swathed their breasts,
And wreathed its garland round their crests,
Or from their spires bade loosely flare,
Its tendrils in the middle air,
As pennons wont to wave of old
O'er the high feast of baron bold.”*

Returning from this long digression, into which the pleasing nature of the subject beguiled us, we will resume our geological disquisitions.

Beneath the western coal basin of the lower Ohio, stretches a formation of slate rock, several hundred feet thick, abounding in iron ore. This again lies upon the

* Rokeby, Canto II. vii. viii.

cavernous limestone, which is found in eastern as well as in western Kentucky, and also in Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas, and always serving as a floor for the coal formation. It is in this cavernous limestone occur the great caves of Kentucky, which have been so much spoken of. As these caves contain subterranean streams, the sound of whose distant roar is heard coming up from deep and dismal abysses, we may without violence account for their long winding galleries and spacious halls, by supposing the violent or gradually erosive action of running water to have been at work ; and as the strata of the limestone, as well as the superposed coal and iron formations, lie in a nearly horizontal position, and with just sufficient dip to allow water to run off easily, the laminæ immediately resting on those parts which crumbled or were worn away, being deprived of their former supports, fell, causing in turn the fall of superior laminæ, till the dilapidation was arrested by some stratum of sufficient breadth and firmness to cover and rest

upon the walls thus formed, and serve as a ceiling to the excavation. The *Temple*, and several of the passages in the Mammoth Cave, have evidently been widened, if not originally formed, by such a process. The presence of water in some of these subterraneous chambers is attested by streams, cascades, pools, percolations, stalactites, and stalagmites. We can form no adequate idea of the force of water in a torrent, from the diminished scale on which we see its operations now. How great a mass of waters might have been accumulating for centuries, till the rocky barriers were no more able to withstand the immense pressure, but gave way before it, we have no data for ascertaining. Reasoning from analogy, however, we see indubitable evidences of such a process in the deeply cut channels of the Kentucky rivers; in the violent efforts of the Shenandoah to effect a junction with the Potomac at Harper's Ferry; in the channel of the Mississippi at the Grand Tower, where a large circular rock of one hundred

feet high emerges from the water on the Missouri side, corresponding with a massy rock jutting out diagonally across on the Illinois shore, which, with the peculiar alluvial formation of the upper country, has led reflecting men to conjecture that a ledge of rock had here pent up the water, and forced it to expand into a vast lake, till, the pressure becoming too great, the barrier yielded, and the river burst forth with impetuosity into a new channel. We find another instance in the Falls of Niagara. Within the memory of men living, the Falls have receded several yards, owing to the disruption of the rocky ledge; and, from tradition and various indications along the shore, it is believed that they have receded some miles during past centuries, before the foot of a white man ever touched the shore: and it has been considered nowise improbable that the cataract once poured down its thunders in the vicinity of the present *Queenstown*.

He that has seen the body of water in

the Mammoth Cave, and heard its deep sullen roar as it was precipitated into unknown abysses, will be prepared to conceive the violent convulsions which may have taken place in the dark and awful solitudes of these caverns, in ages unknown and beyond the memory of men.

Having thus attempted to account for the origin of the great subterranean caves of Kentucky, although we are not geologist enough to explain the singular coincidence, or its reason in nature, why the cavernous limestone should in so many instances prove invariably the floor of a coal formation, we shall now proceed to describe the interior of the Mammoth Cave.

The *Mammoth Cave* is not so called, upon the most diligent inquiry I could make, from any bones or relics of the mastodon having been found there, as some have conjectured. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how that unwieldy animal could descend the steep declivity, or being once down, how he could ever clam-

ber up again. Besides, very soon after entering, the cave narrows to a degree that requires even a man to stoop, much more would it effectually exclude a mammoth. It is on account of its *size* that the name has been bestowed; and not inappropriately, if it be true, as has been affirmed by Mr. Flint, that the famous Grotto of Antiparos will bear no comparison with it for extent or grandeur.

The writer entered, with a party of ten, at four o'clock in the afternoon, and remained in the cave till ten at night, having walked, direct and retrograde movements included, about twelve miles under ground, if our guides might be credited. To guard against being overheated, as well as to prevent soiling by grease or mud, we laid aside our coats. Each man bore a lighted candle in his hand; the guides, to provide against accidents, carrying, in addition to their lamps, a basket full of candles and oil-flasks.

We encountered a brisk current of cool air rushing from the interior towards the

mouth, which extinguished some of our lights. This current ceases to be felt after advancing some yards, and is said to be of cool air in summer, and warm in winter. This may be an index of the uniform temperature of the interior during the year.

Within the first mile we found various pits and large vats, formerly used for extracting *saltpetre*. This mineral abounds in the caves of this region, as well as in the superior conglomerate, but instead of crystallizing on the surface, as in the latter case, the earth is here saturated with it to a considerable depth. It is in the form of nitrate of lime, which had to be decomposed by leaching the lie through wood-ashes in huge vats, and thus converted into nitrate of potassa, the common nitre or saltpetre of commerce. It has been said that fifty pounds of crude nitre have been extracted from one hundred pounds of earth. Great quantities were manufactured during the last war, to the amount it has been stated of four hundred thousand pounds, but since that time the busi-

ness has been neglected. In the Mammoth Cave nothing has been done for several years.

There is another cave in this region, called the *Saltpetre Cave*, which abounds in this mineral, and which was, no long time ago, the scene of a tragical adventure. An individual of the name of Wright, who had conceived the idea of repairing his pecuniary losses by the manufacture of saltpetre, made an engagement with the innkeeper in the vicinity, to meet him at the cave with lights and a guide. The morning proved so inclement, that the innkeeper took it for granted no one would venture out, and therefore sent no guide. He was however mistaken. The stranger, intent on his scheme, was punctual to his appointment at the cave, accompanied by a friend, in spite of the weather, and after waiting a long time in vain for the arrival of the guide, determined to enter alone. Having satisfied their curiosity, they prepared to retrace their steps, but this, like the famous return from Avernus, was not

so easy as the ingress. After pursuing one fork of a branching passage for some time, without reaching the outlet, his companion became convinced that they had taken the wrong path, and remonstrated with his friend, but in vain; he was confident of being right, and insisted on advancing. To add to their confusion, their lights went out, and they were compelled to feel their way in total darkness, the stranger a little in advance. At length his companion heard a sound as of sand sliding down a declivity. He called to his companion, but no answer was returned. He shouted aloud in agony, but the dreary vaults gave back nothing but the echo of his own voice, and the reverberations were succeeded by an awful silence. Horrorstruck at the idea of his friend being lost in one of the dismal pits with which the cave abounded, and of being himself buried alive in the winding chambers, where even his body might never be discovered, he felt ready to sink in despair. But his very despair lent him

energy. Convinced that his conjectures were correct, he turned, and cautiously groped his way back. To his great joy he found the angle where the passage branched, and to his greater joy, he had not long pursued the other gallery, before he saw daylight at a distance beaming in upon him. As soon as practicable, the scene of the late disaster was examined, and on coming to a deep shelving pit, the sandy edge showed too plainly the manner of the accident. The unfortunate adventurer had approached within a foot or two of the brink, when the faithless sand gave way beneath his weight, and he slid rapidly to the bottom. Ropes being procured, his body was found dashed below at a considerable depth, much bruised, and life wholly extinct.

The necessity of keeping in the close vicinity of our guides was soon rendered very apparent, for nothing is easier than to lose oneself in the labyrinths of the four-and-twenty branches that diverge on either hand, veiling in midnight darkness their

treacherous gulfs; from some of which the sound of falling waters came sullenly on the ear.

We explored a few of their branches, but I shall describe the principal objects only which attracted our notice, instead of leading you through every passage and chamber like a guide-book, or expatiating on the fancied images of the *Steamboat*, the *Mirror*, and similar freaks of nature. Leaving to our right the *Haunted Chamber*, we voted to visit *The River*. The Haunted Chamber is a spacious hall, in the centre of which stand two colossal stalagmites of a dusky hue. In this apartment many years ago were found two or more Indian mummies, which after being exhibited over the country, were deposited in Peale's Museum. One figure was a female in a sitting posture, of small size, and very much drawn together. Besides the swathings, and other accompaniments, she wore a bead bag suspended from her wrist, filled with needles and curious ornaments. A labourer whom we afterwards

encountered, told us that he had been employed excavating the nitrous earth, in 1810, and had dug up two or three mummies, but deeming it sacrilegious to disturb the dead, he had covered them again, and could never afterwards identify the place.

The *Bat-Room* is so called from the number of bats which cling to the walls by hundreds, like bees.

The rocky gallery through which we now walked, was arched overhead to the height of twenty or thirty feet, and had much from its novelty to fix our gaze; but mindful of the long task before us, we resolutely pushed onward, leaving the *Haunted Chamber* to the right, and the *Church and Pulpit* to the left, descending gradually, as it seemed, much of the time. We passed on the way a slender stream pouring from the roof into a basin, and hence called the *Cascade*. We also refused to visit the *Grotto*, so called from its numerous stalactites, as we were informed that they were in a very ruinous and confused condition.

After some time we approached a low arched passage, not more than a yard high, but a quarter of a mile in length, through which we crept on our hands and knees; a very fatiguing operation. The bottom was composed of a fine dry yellowish sand, instead of the stiff clay found elsewhere. After ploughing the sand, we emerged into a more roomy space; and a few more turns and descents brought us at last to *The River*.

This is a stream of water twenty feet wide, and they said as many deep. It was discovered only about a year ago. Its current is very sluggish, as has been proved by launching a piece of wood bearing a lighted candle, on its bosom. We were informed that a species of *white fish* were found here without eyes, and the keeper of the hotel assured us he himself had seen them, but that their other senses were so acute, the slightest touch of water overhead was sufficient to alarm them, and make them dart off like lightning. There had been a canoe here; but

the day before it had got loose from its moorings and floated away. In this visitors would row down the stream two hundred yards, till stopped by a ledge of rock. Two of my acquaintances, a week afterwards, obtained a new skiff, and resolved to pass the barrier. Accordingly, lifting the skiff over the rock, they launched it on the other side, and rowed, as they thought, for two miles. They beheld a great many new scenes and chambers never explored before. They also saw some of the *white fish*. As for us, on our visit, we were not favoured with a sight of these natural curiosities, which would have been to the full as interesting a spectacle as Prince Bonbobbin's white mice with green eyes, for which he ransacked the world. All we found was a poor miserable mud-fish, caught with the hand by the guide, near the shore, blinded by the light. It was certainly a wonderful thought, that such a body of water should have been flowing here a furlong at least underground, in the silence and gloom of cen-

turies. So far are these subterranean realms beneath the surface, that a gentleman assured me, a thunderstorm once occurred over his head, while he was in the cave, of which he and his party were totally unconscious.

The next place we visited was the *Dome*, called *Gorin's Dome*, from its discoverer and late owner.

The descent is by a rude ladder, just beside a frightful chasm called the *Bottomless Pit*, whose depth of darkness could not be illuminated by our candles, nor by blazing papers thrown into it. A massy rock, disengaged with some effort, and rolled into the abyss, went down with a loud whizzing for several seconds, which was followed by a dull sullen splash; and then we could hear the waves, agitated by the falling rock and madly resenting the intrusion, heaving, surging, roaring, and lashing the sides of the cavern, like the reverberations of distant thunder.

Having descended the ladder, we found the path winding round a high narrow

crevice, which we followed for some time till we were brought up against a wall perforated by an aperture called from its size, shape, and use, *The Window*. Looking through this window, and holding our lights at arm's length within, we beheld a narrow but lofty chamber, crowned by a beautiful and regularly-shaped dome, running up to a point, and ribbed, like old Gothic masonry; while below all was impenetrable darkness. But when one of the guides by another path descended to the floor, and we saw the light gradually streaming along the ragged edges of the crevice through which he passed, till at last it illuminated the base, and thus enabled the eye to take in the whole interior, it was a grand spectacle. Desirous of enjoying this scene in its full perfection, the writer, with only two or three others of the party, resolved on descending by this other aperture. It was truly a frightful adventure, but having taken the first step, there was no retreat. The aperture was

more like a very narrow well than any thing else, twenty or thirty feet deep, and hardly large enough to admit more than one at a time. Down this cleft we had to navigate pretty much like a chimney-sweep clambering through a chimney, putting out now this hand, now that, to support us. Once I had to stoop till my hands rested where my feet were, and then, disengaging my feet, let my body drop, supported by the palms of my hands, until I reached another projecting ledge to stand on, one foot upon one side, the other on the opposite. It is not to be denied, that when half way down I was troubled with some serious deliberations as to the feasibility of my ever getting up again. However, encouraged by the guides and ashamed to retreat, I persevered, and was richly rewarded. The view from the bottom was grand, awfully grand. Looking up, we beheld a magnificent dome, throwing its lofty span overhead, apparently to the height of one hundred feet; or rather it

was a semi-dome, for the other half more reminded one of a vast spiral staircase winding upwards till lost in utter darkness.

Beneath, on the left hand, lay a deep gloomy den, while on the right, stretching away in midnight blackness, gaped another horrid pool of water, which I supposed, from its position, to be identical with the abyss called the *Bottomless Pit*.

Having gratified our curiosity, we ascended, covered with mud, if not with glory; and furnishing abundant food for merriment to our companions. And here I may remark, that this was certainly any thing but the cave of Trophonius, into which, if any one ventured, he never laughed again, for we had some jovial spirits among us.

The next compartment we turned to visit, was the *Temple*. This is estimated to lie about four miles from the entrance. The way to it is through a noble and spacious gallery, with but few windings, and in general of a lofty height. The sides and roof are thickly encrusted with petri-

factions, and the floor is strewn with fallen fragments of the same kind. This passage, as well as all the others, is covered with staring names and initials traced in smoke; a practice which may indeed immortalize the visiter, and serve as an agreeable remembrancer to succeeding acquaintances, but which shockingly mars the wild grandeur and magnificence of the scene.

This gallery, which is a continuation of the *Main Cave*, is remarkable for having the ceiling discoloured with large black spots, in whose curious sinuosities fancy may trace the frozen serpent of the south, and the various figures of the *Zodiac*. One of these places, where the passage expands a little, is called the *Star-Chamber*. Here, to all appearance, the lofty dome is cleft open, admitting, as through an aperture of the roof, a view of the nightly sky studded with stars. The effect is very fine; and although you are aware of the illusion, you can scarcely be persuaded that you are not looking up at the starry

heavens. This discoloration of the surface is caused by the damp, or black moss, interrupted occasionally by points of rock projecting from the moss and from their lighter colour reflecting the light of the candles, so as to form a contrast, and suggest the idea of stars.

The way underfoot is extremely rough, consisting of fragments of fallen rocks, strewing and almost choking up the bottom of the gallery.

Arrived at length at the *Temple*, we were filled with unmingled admiration at the grand scale on which the works of nature were conducted. The passage here expands into a vast saloon, covering, according to the guides, eight acres of ground. Judging by my eye, and allowing something for the known propensity of cicerones to magnify, with natural partiality, the marvels they exhibit, I should think that four acres would be nearer the truth. We stood beneath the spacious vault, springing to the height of forty or fifty feet or more from the base, covering

acres of ground, yet unsupported by a solitary column in the whole intermediate space—stupendous spectacle! Spreading our party along the sides of this vast chamber, we were able by the line of light to form some estimate of its size. The roof rose in the form of a low circular dome, whose concavity was composed of the edges of laminæ of limestone, broken so gracefully as to have a striking resemblance to clouds piled up against the sky. Seated beneath this magnificent vault, the tuneful part of our company waked its echoes with a fine old chant. The great size of the chamber gave an unusual richness and mellowness to their voices, and as the choral harmony pealed along the rocky vault with slow and solemn cadence, the effect was indescribably impressive.

It was with a feeling like regret that I heard that the present owner, Dr. Croghan, of Louisville, who has just purchased the estate for ten thousand dollars, contemplates clearing out the avenues, and making

them accessible for an omnibus to the distance of three or four miles, for the convenience of the ladies, and erecting a sort of hotel in the temple. Only think of a *hotel* and an *omnibus* in the Mammoth Cave! It may be all very commodious, but I cannot help thinking it will detract from the wild grandeur of the scene. Man seldom meddles with these sublime works of nature, except to mar them, and I must confess, though at the risk of its being ridiculed as a weakness, that, for my own part, I feel almost as much annoyed by these interferences, as did Rousseau among the mountains of Dauphiny, when he found those romantic solitudes which he had fondly dedicated to the worship of Nature, invaded by the din of forge-hammers. The enthusiastic Jean Jacques, to be sure, carried his sentiment rather too far; his friend St. Pierre, with a fancy as glowing but less morbid, would have converted those very hammers into an additional element of the beautiful, and extracted a moral lesson from the forge. Where obvious utility

imperiously demands the sacrifice, the picturesque must be an inferior consideration : but where curiosity is the sole motive, and the whole scene derives its attractions from its very seclusion and native wildness, there seems to be an incongruity in introducing the artificial refinements of social life, and thus destroying the very attributes which give interest to the scene. It would be as preposterous as to light up a camera obscura with gas, or to exhibit a wild Pawnee Loup in a full suit of broad-cloth, without his feathers, his arrows, or his paint.

A hotel in such a situation could be of no conceivable use. Refreshments would be unnecessary ; and to think of a mere coffee-house for loungers, with a bar filled with decanters, and perhaps supplied with cards, would be monstrous. As for passing the night there, most persons would be deterred by fear of dampness ; few would be so weary as to be unable to proceed further ; and still fewer would be affected by the sole stimulus of an excited curiosity.

One of this latter class, indeed, I knew, but he could hardly be induced to repeat the experiment. It was in the autumn of 1838, that I met with him. He was a tall muscular young man, as straight as an Indian, somewhat bronzed by the sun, and his habiliments rather Gibeonitish. He was the son of an eminent citizen of Cincinnati, and was on his return from a pedestrian excursion for amusement to the Mammoth Cave. He had a violin slung in a green bag, under his arm, with whose music he had solaced his weary hours, and entertained his hosts along the road.

Burning to feel the sublimity which he imagined the solitude and total darkness must create, he had passed the night alone in the cave, having an understanding with the guides. I asked him if he had felt the sublimity he expected ; but from his reply, should conjecture he had been disappointed, for he complained dolefully of the bats, which kept flying over his face all night.

About ten o'clock at night, we emerged from the cave's mouth, the stars shining

down upon us calmly. We had been under ground six hours, and had walked, as we were told, a dozen miles; but the exhilaration of our spirits prevented us from being conscious of fatigue. Although we had been stripped of our upper garments, the exercise had kept us sufficiently comfortable, nor did we experience, as we were told was usual, an oppressive warmth in the atmosphere without. The walking was generally dry, and never so damp as to be inconvenient or unwholesome. At length, after supper, we got to bed; but, between the day's excitement and the late supper, our dreams were of rocks and dens and antres vast; and the landlord afterwards averred, that some of his guests had made a terrible noise in the night, and called out lustily for *Stephen, the guide!*

The next morning most of our party rode off, leaving but four of us to complete the exploration. Upon the acquisition of these companions, the writer felicitated himself as one of those rare and agreeable conjunctures, which, as they seldom hap-

pen, are more highly prized, and which so much heighten the interest of occasions like this. Three of us could tell of the wonders we had severally seen in three continents; and as we rode, on our return, through seven miles of dreary and broken woodlands, the way was agreeably beguiled by the mutual recital. While one expatiated on the bold and rocky Alps, the second narrated his adventures in Africa, and told how he had been swamped in the surge, and how he had ridden on men's shoulders. As for the third, though he had wandered in no foreign climes, he had been an incurable domestic lion-hunter, and for the gratification of his curiosity, had traversed half the States of the Union. True, he had neither seen the Alps nor the Rhine, nor palavered with African kings, nor ridden on men's shoulders; but he consoled himself with the recollection of indigenous marvels. He had sailed beneath the *palisadoes* of the Hudson; he had gazed with rapture on the blended magnificence and beauty of

Niagara: he had beheld the far-famed scenery of *Harper's Ferry*; he had looked down from the dizzy crag of the *Hawk's Nest*, on the diminished river chafing below; he had felt his bosom expand at the confluence of the *Ohio* and *Mississippi*; he had climbed the celebrated *Iron Mountains* of Missouri, rising in a cone of near seven hundred feet high; he had looked up with awe on the frowning *Cliffs of the Kentucky*; and now, to mention no more, he had just pierced the subterraneous labyrinths of the *Mammoth Cave*. Such was the little company, thus fortuitously attracted together by common curiosity.

Having resolved to commence the day with a survey of another cave, of inferior extent, hard by, called the *White Cave*, from its being filled with white concretions, we repaired thither after breakfast. This cave, or rather grotto, lies within half a mile of the hotel, and is situated on the declivity of a hill. Its mouth is contracted, and will not admit a man without stooping; nor is there more than one or two cham-

bers in the interior. Its incrustated roof is mostly low. This grotto is filled with stalactites and massy stalagmites. You behold concretions above you, around you, beneath your feet, glistening in the light of the candles. There is here none of the inconceivable wildness and grandeur of the Mammoth Cave, but, on the contrary, much to awaken the sentiment of the beautiful. Soon after entering, we passed into a low chamber, through the openings of a magnificent *screen*, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, now parted like solid pillars, now expanded like the broad folds of heavy drapery, and again in one corner, projecting in a columnar mass, resembling a large *organ*. It seemed as if a sheet of water had poured down from fissures in the ceiling, and suddenly petrified as it flowed. Our European traveller assured us, that we might have a very good idea of the venerable and elaborate carved-work of old Gothic churches, from this fantastic screen of dusky white, which stretched, like a partition, across the entire

length of the apartment, dividing it in two. Here a beautiful little basin, of an oval shape, four or five feet in its longest diameter, attracted our admiration. It is composed of the same materials with the surrounding formations, and is filled to the brim with clear pellucid water, the quantity of which never increases nor diminishes. Its charm consists in a neat border, three or four inches in height, which surrounds the edge like a standing ruffle, disposed in folds or plaits, as if it had been crimped. It has received the poetical name of *Laon's Fount*. As we held up our candles to the little stalactites, pendent from the ceiling, we saw a drop of water percolating through each tube, and refracting a beautiful iris. In these drops we saw several little black animalculæ, which frisked about, apparently in great uneasiness, when the flame approached too near their watery habitation. Besides these petty specimens of animated nature, numerous crickets, apparently fat and well fed, were clinging to the walls in

every quarter. As the grotto was of no great capacity, and did not present much variety in its attractions, our visit was brief.

Upon our egress, we were to have resumed our examination of the Great Cave, but finding that the long walk of the previous evening, with its clamberings and creepings, had fatigued us more than the exhilaration of the scene permitted us to be conscious of at the moment, we agreed to drop the project, and remain satisfied with what we had already witnessed. To this we were the more easily reconciled, from having been told that we had already seen the principal wonders. Accordingly, we remounted our horses, and made our way back to Bell's tavern, where we received a friendly welcome from the cleverest and most accommodating of landlords.

Thus ended an excursion, in which we were amply repaid for a few petty inconveniences, by the high degree of gratification we had tasted; while our hearts were

conscious of vivid emotions of admiration and reverence, as we witnessed the grand scale on which the Creator conducts his works in the hidden laboratories of nature, and the wild magnificence underground, even more astonishing than those revealed in the light of day.

It is good to break in occasionally upon the whirl of business, and to withdraw from the heartless forms of artificial life, in order to cultivate a love of nature, and to afford the mind that opportunity for reflection and repose which is denied it in the crowd. The Americans are accused of being more indifferent to the cultivation of the love of nature than Europeans. They are less fond of exercise in the open air; they more seldom diversify the monotony of business, and smooth down the rugged brow of care by rural excursions; they take less pleasure in cultivating gardens; while in England even the humblest cottage is adorned with flowers and creeping plants; and as to the rude magnificence of nature's scenery, and the bold

and beautiful features, the picturesque, or the stupendous, which her hand has flung over the western continent, the mass of our citizens are comparatively strangers to marvels, the bare description of which captivates all Europe.

These are indeed "cups which cheer, but not inebriate;" these are refined and elegant pleasures, which improve while they unbend the mind, and impart an intellectual character even to its relaxations. To a man of such tastes, solitude itself has charms; he finds entertainment instead of weariness in conversing with Nature, and her rudest scenes afford him pleasure, by awakening new trains of thought.

We are so constituted that we demand variety. After being a long time accustomed to a certain set of objects, or a particular routine of occupations, our views are apt to become contracted, and the healthy tone of the mind is impaired.

There are certain emotions and sentiments of which man is susceptible, that

cannot be brought into play in the ordinary course of life. As the muscles of a sedentary person are cramped for want of exercise, and experience an agreeable relief when another set of muscles is called into action, so it is with our mental susceptibilities. Man, confined to his narrow sphere, is in danger of attaching too much importance to the external symbols of wealth, power, and distinction, which are constantly before his eyes; and of thinking these to be the only objects worthy of attention, or capable of ministering delight. The finer sentiments of the soul are smothered, or rather ossified, amidst the calculating, matter-of-fact, money-making world.

Let him therefore retire occasionally, that he may contrast the freshness of nature with the feverish irritations, the jealous thwartings, and the petty emulations of human life; and let him taste those purer and more quiet pleasures to which he has been long a stranger. Let him learn that he is made up of something else, beside a

body; let him make the discovery that he has *a soul* that can *feel*. Let him behold spectacles beside whose grandeur the pursuits and works of man sink into insignificance; and let him trace in those broad and masterly strokes a hand superior to that of mortals.

All natural objects, whether of grandeur or beauty, suggest the idea of something corresponding in mind. The poet personifies all nature, and sees a Dryad in every oak, a Naiad in every stream; and the most prosaic learn to speak in metaphors, and talk of *frowning* rocks and *angry* torrents. In the terms thus employed, we discern a reference to mind; and thus the sublime in nature has its counterpart in *moral* grandeur, majesty, or terror.

This investing all nature with intelligence, and introducing a sentiment to heighten our interest, leads by a very simple process to the conception of a supreme intelligence presiding over nature. For as Lord Bacon in one of his essays well remarks: "It were less ab-

surd to swallow the monstrosities of the Alcoran, the Talmud, and the Legends, than to suppose the fabric of the universe unconnected with a presiding mind. Hence God has never wrought a miracle to confute Atheism, his ordinary works being all-sufficient for that purpose."

Shakspeare has painted the contemplative man finding "*sermons in stones.*" It is a beautiful thought, and St. Pierre is a beautiful example of its truth. See how, at the touch of genius, as beneath the stroke of the prophet's rod, the rock yields up its hidden treasures. He supposes the pleasure of contemplating timeworn ruins to arise from the impression of their antiquity; and that the contrast of our own ephemeral labours with the perpetuity of nature, launches our thoughts still farther into infinity. This going out of ourselves, this leaping over the narrow limits of present space and time, is an association of sentiment which is invariable, and must therefore be regarded as a law of our moral constitution, a native instinct, like

all other instincts, infallible; which at once reveals a soul yearning after the infinite, and points to a Deity in whom the idea of the infinite is finally realized. "Thus," says he, "I embrace at once the past and future at sight of an insensible rock, and which, in consecrating it to virtue, I render far more venerable than by decorating it with the five orders of architecture."

The pure and elevated pleasures to which we have alluded as springing from a love of nature, have been graphically depicted by Burns in one of the happiest inspirations of his muse. Burns was himself a child of Nature, and better deserved that title for his epitaph than the nervous Rousseau, over whose tomb in the Isle of Poplars it was inscribed. The animated Apostrophe to Nature by the Scottish poet, breathes sentiments no less beautiful than true.

"O Nature! all thy shows and forms,
To feeling, pensive hearts, have charms;
Whether the summer kindly warms,
With life and light;
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The long, dark night!

"The Muse! no poet ever found her,
 Till by himself he learned to wander,
 Adown some trottin' burn's meander,
 And not think long;
 O sweet! to stray and pensive ponder
 A heartfelt song!

"The worldly race may drudge and drive,
 Elbow and jostle, stretch and strive;
 Let me fair *Nature's* face describe,
 And I with pleasure,
 Shall let the busy, grumbling, hive
 Hum o'er their treasure."

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SOME NOTICES
OF THE
EARLY HISTORY OF KENTUCKY.

READ BEFORE THE TRANSYLVANIA INSTITUTE,
DECEMBER 17, 1838; AND SINCE READ BY
REQUEST BEFORE THE KENTUCKY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
LOUISVILLE.



EARLY HISTORY OF KENTUCKY.

Historians of Kentucky—Interesting materials—Sources of information—Discovery of Kentucky—Early settlements—Enthusiasm of the first explorers—Country described—Biography of Col. Henderson—His obscure birth—Rapid rise to distinction—Embarrassments—Ambitious projects—Outlawry—Transylvania Colony—Proprietary government—House of Delegates—Defeat of the enterprise—The McAfee Company—Hardships—Cache robbed—The runaway—McAfee's station—Famine of 1779—Young McCoun carried off by Indians—Burnt alive at the stake—Attack on the station—Gallant defence—The poltroon and his brave wife—Domestic manners—Virginia patents—Profuse issue of land-warrants—Subsequent litigation—Land-jobbing in Europe—Curious article in American Museum—Rush of emigrants—Statistics—Opposition from the savages—Etymology of Can-tuck-kee—The title to the soil purchased from the Cherokees and Five Nations—Kentucky hunters—Anecdote of Col. Payne and the bloodhounds—Virginia the mother-country—Military settlers—Native enthusiasm—Predominant influence in the west—Statistical illustration—Tribute to a distinguished statesman.

IN the prosecution of historical researches of a professional nature, materials occa-

sionally fell within the reach of the writer of this paper, which, although foreign from the special purpose to which he had an eye, may prove neither unsuitable nor uninteresting on the present occasion. Some notices of the early settlement of Kentucky will readily obtain the attention of an audience no less patriotic than intelligent.

There are three principal sources to which those desirous of information on this subject usually resort. The "History of Kentucky," written by Humphrey Marshall, which is the oldest; the "History of Kentucky," by Mann Butler, of more recent date; and the nearly contemporaneous volumes of Judge Hall, entitled "Sketches of the West."

Mr. Marshall's work is not popular, having fallen into unmerited disrepute on account of the strong prejudices and political partizanship of the author. It cannot be denied, however, that these qualities impart a raciness and piquancy to the work, which keep attention from flagging, and supply a stimulus to curiosity. Its intrinsic

merits are great, but it is now scarce, if not entirely out of print.

The history from the pen of Mr. Butler is less obnoxious to the preceding censure ; but while it displays diligence and research, it lies open to the objection of heaviness in the matter and carelessness in the style. Towards the close especially, there is too evident a readiness to borrow largely from the labours of others, apparently to save the trouble of working up the material into an original paragraph.

Of the three, Judge Hall's volumes are decidedly the most captivating to a general reader. It is true, the nature of his plan is professedly sketchy and superficial, and advances no pretensions to the stately march of history : but he carries us along so smoothly, and withal so satisfactorily, that we regret he did not lay out his energies upon what might have proved at once a standard work and a lasting monument to his own fame. His style is polished, graceful, and sprightly ; and he imparts vivacity to every topic he handles. His

views and reflections are generally judicious, and his narrative gives evidence of considerable and original research. It would be a pity that the title he has chosen should ever be the means of depriving him of the credit which his industry deserves.

While each of these writers has his peculiar merits, we must be pardoned for the opinion, that neither of the productions alluded to, is fairly entitled to the rank and honours of a standard work. Our Livy is yet to make his appearance.

The intensely interesting nature of the early history of this State, an interest not exceeded by the history of any other section of the Union ; the important relations, domestic and foreign, which Kentucky has sustained at various times ; the exciting character of the severe political contests from which she at last safely emerged, to her present prosperity and commanding elevation ; the extraordinary religious commotions in the beginning of the current century, to which all eyes were turned in wonder, and which puzzled the metaphy-

sicians and physiologists, not only of New England, but of London and Edinburgh; the biography of those gifted sons of Kentucky who have made themselves conspicuous at home or abroad; the influence which Kentucky has from the first exerted on this side of the Alleghanies, and not unseldom beyond them; all these circumstances demand a historian industrious in collecting facts as Livy; comprehensive in his views as Polybius; profoundly acquainted with the human heart as Tacitus; skilled in sketching individual portraits as Sallust; philosophical as Gibbon; elegant as Robertson, and easy as Hume. Could the strength of Marshall be blended with the accuracy of Butler, and the whole adorned with the grace of Hall, we would, in thus amalgamating the peculiar merits of each, or rather fusing them down together into a new compound, possess a work at once instructive and entertaining; a work that would descend to after generations as a noble memorial of some of the most interesting occurrences on which the

sun has ever shone. It is fervently to be wished that some gifted pen will yet execute the task.

But while the general reader can derive much valuable information from the authors already mentioned, there are other sources which as yet are either locked up, or have been but sparingly laid open. There are, for example, volumes of early travels, containing much minute and curious matter, which are almost entirely out of print, or slumber undisturbed amid the venerable dust of public libraries. There exist numerous manuscripts, letters, journals, and similar documents of an ancient date, which remain private property. But such is the commendable liberality with which private cabinets are thrown open to the inspection of honourable and judicious investigators, that the search would be richly rewarded by bringing to light papers relating to public affairs, or illustrative of national traits and manners. This last is a subject much neglected, and often regarded as beneath the dignity of the his-

toric muse, but, when properly managed, it is capable of shedding much light on the secret history of any age. Carlyle, in spite of his insufferably turgid and affected quaintness, may be cited as an instance, to the point, in his recent attempt to develop the causes and progress of the French Revolution. This mine is far from being exhausted, and he who perseveringly penetrates its depths, will find his labour repaid by many a gem, and many a rich block of ore.

It is from such sources that the present essay is almost wholly compiled. Should it prove capable of communicating new and agreeable information to those who have perused only the historical works already alluded to, the writer will feel a high degree of gratification in finding that the pursuit of one department of knowledge has incidentally opened the way to the rich stores contained in another. It will prove a fresh illustration of the truth, that a connexion subsists between all parts of knowledge, and that a ray from some re-

mote and unthought-of point may shed light upon that which is the object of immediate attention, and dispel the haze in which it was enveloped. The cultivation of one branch of science leads to the acquisition of more, and there is no kind of information which we can afford to throw away as worthless. The ancients elegantly fabled, that the Muses, the nine daughters of Memory, were sisters. By the benign tendency and operation of knowledge, the intellect becomes expanded, and is rendered capable of taking liberal and comprehensive views of every subject presented for contemplation.

For this reason the study of the liberal sciences should be fostered, and those seats of learning which are erected for their acquisition should be munificently endowed. They are fountains of health to the young republic, imparting wisdom to vigour, direction to enterprise, and stability to both. To such wise policy, beyond doubt, Kentucky is indebted for much of her past greatness. The very first session she had

a representative on the floor of the Virginia Assembly, she obtained a charter for a seminary of learning, and three years after, it went into operation under the presiding care of that venerable patriarch, the Rev. David Rice.* This was the germ of the University of Transylvania. It would have been a pleasing office to expatiate here on the early fortunes of this venerable institution, but that labour is rendered unnecessary. It is only a fortnight since the subject was touched by a masterly hand.†

Looking back to the middle of the last century, we find the southern portion of the American continent in the hands of Spain, glutting her cupidity without interruption; while the possession of the northern part was warmly contested by the great rival powers of England and France. The schemes which the Grand Monarque had formed, were truly magnificent, and

* Bishop's Mem. of Rice, p. 97.

† Ex-Governor Morehead, in a lecture on the Colonial History of Kentucky, read before the Institute.

with rapid strides they were approaching their consummation. Numerous missionaries and traders were binding the native tribes fast in the French interest, and a very little time longer, would have seen the entire western country secured by a chain of military posts, from the Canadas to Louisiana. But while the French coveted with such eagerness the wide and fertile valley west of the Alleghanies, the English and Anglo-Americans, but for one consideration, would have resigned it with indifference. They took up arms, not so much to gain a rich tract of country, as to prevent the proximity of dangerous neighbours. It is not a little remarkable, that at the very period when the war of 1755 was raging, Kentucky and all the charming region of the Ohio, although defended with great pertinacity, appear to have been unknown, except to a few Indian traders and Long Hunters, who had penetrated the wilderness above the Cumberland gap, and had viewed with delight the landscape that stretched away toward

the setting sun, like an undulating sea of verdure.*

A map, rudely constructed by Lewis Evans, and published in 1752,† seems to have given the first definite idea of this region, and, together with the reports that began to be circulated, inspired curiosity. Several exploring parties visited Kentucky; but no permanent settlement was effected till 1775. What constituted a *settlement* in those days, might, indeed, admit of controversy; as the term was applied with great latitude to all sorts of improvements, from planting corn to building stations.

Boone commenced the fort of Boonesborough, on the 1st of April, 1775, as he himself informs us in his narrative dictated to Filson.‡ The same year witnessed the rise of Harrodsburgh, then Harrod's Station.§ A grave dispute has been car-

* Imlay's Topograph. Descr. of the West. Terr. p. 5.

† Winterbotham's View of the U. S. vol. i. p. 170.

‡ Boone's Account, apud. Imlay, p. 343.

§ McAfee's MS. Hist. of the Settlements on Salt River, p. 8.

ried on as to which can claim priority. Frankfort has also put in a claim, as may be seen on consulting the files of the "Commonwealth."* The battle which gave a name to the city of Lexington, was fought on April 19th of the same year, 1775; which gives us a clue to the date of its foundation. A party of sturdy hunters, so runs the current tradition,† had kindled their evening fire, and were seated on their buffalo robes around its cheerful blaze, deliberating, as may be supposed, upon the name by which they should designate the newly selected site, when the news arrived. In the enthusiasm of the moment, the spot was named Lexington by acclamation, to commemorate the important event. Lexington thrived rapidly, and rose to be, for a long time, the commercial and literary metropolis of the west.

The first explorers of Kentucky, spread every where, on their return to the old

* Commonwealth, for May 16th, 1838.

† Flint's Hist. and Geogr. of the Miss. Valley, vol. i. p. 353.

settlements, the most glowing accounts of what they had seen. The luxuriance of the soil; the salubrity of the climate; the face of the country, neither mountainous nor a tame level, but diversified with graceful undulations, like dimples on the cheek of beauty; the tall waving cane and native clover; the magnificent groves of sugar-tree and walnut; the countless herds of buffalo and elk; the pure and limpid brooks; the deeply channelled rivers, sweeping beneath precipitous limestone cliffs, several hundred feet in height; add to which, the verdure of the vegetation, the air loaded with fragrance; the groves resonant with melody; and those various charms peculiar to the spring; all conspired to invest the newly discovered region with an air of romance, that seemed to realize the dreams of the poets. Nature has, indeed, been lavish of her gifts to this favourite spot; and although the buffalo has long since disappeared, and the face of the country, reclaimed from a state of nature, exhibits fewer of those wild features which

made it so picturesque, the traveller still pauses to offer the tribute of his admiration.

Upon Boone, the view burst with the suddenness and splendour of enchantment. After a dreary route through the wilderness, he descried, from an eminence near Red River, clothed in all the loveliness of spring, that extensive champaign country, about fifty miles square, of which Lexington is the centre, and which comprises the counties of Bourbon, Scott, Woodford, Fayette, Jessamine, and Clarke; a body of land, if the united testimony of travellers may be credited, among the finest and most agreeable in the world. Contrasted with the sterile sands of North Carolina, which Boone had just left, it appeared, to use his own words, "a second paradise."* Imlay, Filson, and Smyth, among the earlier, and Flint, Hall, De la Vigne, Martineau, and Murray, employ language scarcely less glowing than Boone, and

* Boone's Acct. *apud* Imlay, p. 338, 341, 343.

seem to vie with each other in searching for terms sufficiently eulogistic. Even the sober historian, Butler, is betrayed into hyperbole when speaking of "this great natural park," and styles it, emphatically, "the Eden of the red man."*

Fired by the descriptions which were given of this delightful region, crowds began to flock thither from every quarter. The rush was unexampled. Anticipating such a state of things, and determining to take advantage of it, a bold and enterprising genius arose, who conceived a truly magnificent project, being actuated partly by ambitious, partly by mercenary motives. This man was Col. Richard Henderson, of North Carolina. The strength of character and the extraordinary talent he displayed, as well as the grandeur of the plan which he matured and for a time put into triumphant operation, deserve a particular notice. Without entering into the

* Butler's Hist. of Ky. c. vi. p. 90.

details of his enterprise, which may be found in the histories, and more at large in that of Judge Hall,* we shall only supply what is wanting in those works, a biographical sketch of this extraordinary individual.

The materials for this sketch are derived from the *Travels of J. Ferdinand D. Smyth*. He was an English physician, whose curiosity led him to travel over the United States; and who, having become personally acquainted with Col. Henderson, afterwards paid him a visit at his settlement in Kentucky, a short time previous to the Revolutionary War. When that event took place, he was exposed to various perils on account of his violent Tory principles; but escaping from them all, he received a captaincy in the British service. He published in London, in the year 1784, his *Travels through the United States*. Besides the more copious materials ob-

* Hall's *Sketches of the West*, vol. ii. p. 221.

tained from Smyth, Filson and Imlay have each furnished some hints for the following sketch.*

Richard Henderson was the son of a poor man in the obscure settlement of Nutbush, in the upper part of North Carolina. He reached maturity without knowing how to read or write, but by persevering application he taught himself letters and arithmetic. Passing through the gradations of constable, under-sheriff, and county-court attorney, he reached the superior judicature of the province; and upon this more conspicuous theatre, crowded though it was with able advocates and brilliant orators, he fought his way to distinction. Such were his transcendent abilities, that, while yet a young man, he was raised from the bar to the bench as associate judge of the province;† and this

* Smyth's *Tour*, vol. i. p. 124. By some mistake he calls him Nathaniel. Filson's *Discov. of Ky.* *apud* Imlay, p. 309. Imlay, Letter I. p. 7.

† Smyth says, "associate chief judge;" but as there is an obvious incongruity in the terms, I have chosen

exalted station he filled with credit to himself and with increasing reputation. At the same time he was such an agreeable companion, and so gay, affable, and facetious in his manners, that envy was ashamed to show her head; and with all his shining talents and great popularity, he did not provoke a single personal enemy.

Mr. Henderson was now enjoying a handsome salary, but having made great purchases, and indulged in an expensive style of living, he soon found himself involved beyond his means. It was then that his fertile genius devised a bold stroke for achieving at once fortune and fame. Under the pretext of examining some back lands, he secretly negotiated with the chiefs of the Cherokee tribe for the purchase of that vast domain embraced between the Kentucky and Cumberland rivers. The famous Daniel Boone was his pioneer and agent; and the compact

to call him simply an associate judge, as more within the range of probability than that he should be the chief judge.

was ratified at Watauga, in March, 1775.* For this extensive and valuable tract of land, comprising in fact all that portion lying south of the Kentucky River, Henderson paid the Cherokees, according to Smith, ten wagon-loads of cheap goods, such as coarse woollens, trinkets, fire-arms, and spirits.† Filson estimates the amount at which the goods were rated, at £6,000 specie.‡

As soon as the transaction was ratified, the seal of secrecy was taken off, and Henderson and a company of gentlemen whom he associated with himself as joint proprietors, issued invitations to settlers. His next step was to vacate his seat on the bench, for the higher dignity of acting as proprietary, legislator, and governor of a new and prosperous colony. It was to no purpose that the purchase of lands from the Indian nations by private individuals was interdicted, and declared null and

* Boone, *apud* Imlay, p. 344.

† Smyth's Tour, vol. i. p. 126.

‡ Filson, *ut supra*, p. 309.

void without the sanction and assent of the governor and assembly; it was to no purpose that the authorities of the adjoining provinces outlawed his person, offered rewards for his apprehension, and forbade the people to abet him. In spite of all efforts to thwart the scheme, it was prosecuted with vigour, and by the end of the year, (1775,) as many as nine hundred entries had been registered on the books of the new land-office.* Henderson's next care was to frame a code of laws suitable to the time; and a regular government was established under the style of the Colony of Transylvania, or, when translated into the plain vernacular, the Colony of the Back Woods. Within the space of two months from the purchase, a House of Delegates, duly elected, was organized, May 23d, 1775. Col. Thomas Slaughter was chosen chairman, Matthew Jewett, clerk, Rev. John Lythe, chaplain, and Robert McAfee, sergeant-at-arms.

* Hall's Sketches, Appendix, vol. ii. p. 242.

The House being duly organized, notice was carried in form to Col. Henderson, whereupon he was pleased to give his gracious assent to the proceedings; and then, with as punctilious observance of form, he met the body in person, and in his own name and that of the joint proprietors, opened the convention with a speech.*

The growing dissatisfaction of the community at large, the great political changes which ended in our national independence, and above all, the jealousy of the Virginia Assembly, ere long put a stop to the project. The Transylvania Company were forced to relinquish their title in 1781, but were indemnified for the disappointment by receiving in lieu from the government of Virginia, the grant of a large tract of land of Col. Henderson's own selection, of two hundred thousand acres, or twelve miles square, between the forks of the Ohio

* Hall, vol. i. c. iii. p. 264.

and Green rivers.* It is at present included in the county of Henderson, which name was given in honour of the man who had been the life and soul of the enterprise. North Carolina also granted them a like quantity of land in Powell's Valley. Thus ended, after six years' duration, this splendid essay at proprietary government; in which we are at a loss which to admire most, the enterprise of the self-taught and strong-minded man who was its author; the grandeur of the plan which he projected; or the wisdom which presided over its execution.

Among the early settlers of Kentucky, the *M'Ashee Company* deserves a distinct notice; and their various adventures and perils may serve as a lively specimen of the extremities to which the colonists were often reduced. The materials from which the following description is prepared, are contained in a bulky MS. volume, enti-

* Imlay, Lett. I. p. 8. Filson, *ut supra*, p. 309.

tled “ *The History of the Rise and Progress of the First Settlements on Salt River, and Establishment of the New Providence Church.*” This volume has been laboriously compiled from original and authentic documents, by General Robert B. M’Afee, of Mercer county, formerly Lieutenant Governor of the State, and author of a History of the late War. No liberties have been taken with the narrative, except such as have been rendered unavoidable, by the necessity of compressing portions of it into a reasonable compass for the present occasion.

Inflamed by the reports of the Indians and hunters, a company of five men left their homes near Sinking Spring, Botetourt county, in the Valley of Virginia, on May 10th, 1773, to explore the western wilds, with a double view to future residence and to distinction as the first adventurers. These persons were James, George, and Robert M’Afee, James M’Coun, sen., and Samuel Adams; all, except the last named, who was a mere stripling, heads of families

and all men of good character and religious principles.

Their meeting with Bullitt and Taylor the surveyors; the talk with the Shawnee Chiefs; their visit to the Big Bone Lick, which an old Cherokee told them was in the same state in his youth, and about which he could communicate no further information; the surveys which they made; and their route from the mouth of the Kentucky to Frankfort and Salt River, which are minutely detailed, we shall pass over. Suffice it to say, that surveys were made for them at various points, closing in the vicinity of Harrodsburgh; and on July 31st, they turned their faces homeward. They proceeded under showers of rain, and suffering various hardships. When they reached the foot of the mountains, their stock of provisions failed, and game was difficult to procure. To cross the mountains proved likewise a very laborious undertaking, covered as they were with laurel, underbrush, and pine.

The 12th of August was a gloomy day

to this little band. They had gained the highest point of the craggy range dividing the head waters of the Kentucky and Clinch rivers; a region that seemed the abode of desolation. Nothing but barren rocks frowned on every side, and silence and solitude reigned uninterrupted. Not a living animal was to be seen, nor a bird to cheer them with its wild notes. They were exposed to a broiling sun; their feet were blistered; and their legs were torn and raw from the effect of the briers; add to which, they were literally starving, not having had a mouthful to eat for two days. Such a combination of misfortunes was enough to appal the stoutest heart.

The day was drawing to a close; the sun was sinking in the west, and gilding the mountain's top with his last setting beams; they had not as yet seen a solitary animal that could serve for food; and the herbage was not only scanty but unfit for sustenance. To complete their distress, they found the head-springs of the water-courses dried up by the excessive

heat, and not affording a drop to allay their thirst. Exhausted by fatigue, hunger, and despair, George M'Afee and young Adams threw themselves on the ground, declaring themselves unable to proceed any farther. As a last desperate effort, Robert M'Afee then determined to compass the ridge in quest of game, leaving James with the two others to rally their spirits. He had not proceeded a quarter of a mile, when a young buck crossed his path; and although agitated by intensely anxious feelings, he was so good a marksman as to bring him down at the first shot. On hearing the report of his gun, the rest of the company, forgetting their fatigue, sprang up, and ran to the spot whence the sound proceeded. The meal, thus opportunely furnished, they devoured with keen appetites, and slaked their thirst from a branch which they discovered adjacent; while their hearts overflowed with gratitude to that Providence, which, by so timely an interposition, had rescued them from the jaws of death. Recruited in

strength, they resumed their journey, and soon reached their homes ; where, in spite of the hardships and hazards attending the exploit, the accounts they published inspired a general enthusiasm to imitate their example.

Indian wars and the battle of Kenhawa, detained them in Virginia during the succeeding year ; but the year 1775 found them among the canebrakes. Robert, Samuel, and William M'Afee, allowed themselves to be persuaded by Col. Henderson to unite their fortunes with his, against the wholesome advice of their elder brother James, who assured them that Henderson's claim could not be valid, because without the sanction of government. They went to Boonesborough, entered land and raised corn, but, as was predicted, the scheme proved abortive. In the fall, we find the company reunited, consisting of William, George, and Robert M'Afee, Geo. M'Gee, David Adams, John M'Coun, and some others, and under the protection of the newly erected Harrod's Station, they

cleared fifteen acres of ground below the mouth of Armstrong's Branch, in Mercer county, and planted it in corn. A part of the company wintered here, while the rest went back to Virginia, leaving forty head of cattle to fatten on the luxuriant cane and herbage. These last mentioned persons took measures to return in the spring following, calculating that the corn and cattle would, by this time, be in a condition to support them.

Accordingly, in May, 1776, they packed up their household property and farming utensils, with a quantity of seeds of various kinds, barrels of corn and flour, and stores of coffee, sugar, and spices, not omitting a few bottles of whisky and spirits, (*by way of medicine, no doubt,*) which they placed, for security, in the middle of the flour and corn barrels, and attempted to convey them in canoes down the Gauley and Kenhawa rivers; but finding this impracticable, they resolved to go back for pack horses. Having built a strong log cabin, resembling the *caches* described by

Washington Irving in his Astoria, as used by the fur-traders, they deposited in it all their property, and covering it with bark, left it in this situation in the wilderness. The rumour of hostilities, and the war of the Revolution caused a delay of several months; and when they returned in September, they found the *cache*, to their dismay, broken open, the roof torn off, and rugs, blankets, barrels, and stores, strewn in confusion around, and totally ruined. On making some search, they found evidences of some one having taken out the bedding to sleep on, under an adjacent cliff, and that the same person had rummaged their kegs and barrels, in order to get at the liquor.

No Indian *sign*, as the traces of the savages were called, was visible; but upon searching by parties of two, they found, within half a mile of the spot, a diminutive red-haired man, on whose person they discovered some of the missing articles. Vexed at the wanton destruction of so many valuable stores of coffee, sugar,

spices, and the like articles, which they had been for years collecting, at a time too, when they were so much needed, and could not be replaced where they were going; and provoked beyond endurance by the wretch's denial, although proofs were on his person, one of the party felled him to the ground with his tomahawk, and was on the point of despatching him with his knife, when his brother seized his arm and prevented the rash act.

The fellow's name was Edward Sommers. He was a convict servant, who had run off from his master in the interior of Virginia, and was making the best of his way to the Indians. As soon as he recovered from the stunning effect of the blow he had received, he was led to the cabin, where a council was held upon the case. He was adjudged to have forfeited his life according to the laws of the land, but as none of the company was willing to execute the hangman's office, the miserable wretch escaped with his life. He was compelled, however, to accompany

them back to Virginia, where he was delivered up into the hands of his master, and very probably received such a scourging as made him more desirous to run away than ever.

The war with Great Britain, in which the members of this company and all their connexions heartily united, hindered the resumption of their darling project for the next two years, during which time the cattle they had imported ran wild in the woods, or fell the prey of Indian marauders, and were irrecoverably lost.

The year 1779 saw these enterprising adventurers settled with their families on their new territory, having passed the Cumberland Gap with pack-horses. Their first care was to fortify themselves in a quadrangular enclosure of cabins and stockades, to which was given the name of *M'Affee's Station*. A winter of unexampled severity ensued; and from the middle of November to the middle of February, snow and ice continued on the ground without a thaw. Many of the

cattle perished ; and numbers of bears, buffalo, deer, wolves, beavers, otters, and wild turkeys, were found frozen to death. Sometimes the famished wild animals would come up in the yard of the stations along with the tame cattle. Such was the scarcity of food, that a single johnny-cake would be divided into a dozen parts, and distributed round to the inmates, to serve for two meals. Even this resource failed, and for weeks they had nothing to live upon but wild game. Early in the spring, some of the men went to the Falls of the Ohio, now Louisville, where they gave sixty dollars (continental money) for a bushel of corn ; which was considered an enormous price, even making allowance for its depreciated value ; but the only alternative was starvation.

A delightful spring, and the rapid growth of vegetation, promised to repay them for the hardships they had undergone. The peach-trees they had planted five years before, were loaded with fruit, and the apple-trees were also in a thriving con-

dition. Plenty and happiness smiled upon the settlement, when, by one of those unexpected reverses, which seem designed by Providence to admonish us of what we are too apt to forget, the uncertain tenure of our earthly prosperity, and the small reliance to be placed upon present appearances, their flattering prospects were all at once damped by a melancholy event that filled every heart with gloom.

Joseph McCoun, a promising lad, the youngest and the darling son of his father, and the favourite of the whole family, was surprised and carried off by a party of Shawanoe Indians, while looking after some cattle in an adjoining glade. His companion escaped, and immediately gave the alarm; but pursuit was vain. The savages carried their unhappy victim to a little town on the head waters of Mad River, about six miles above the spot now occupied by the town of Springfield, Ohio, where they tied him to a stake and burned him with excruciating tortures. After this heart-rending event, which took place

in March, 1781, the families, seven in number, abandoned the farms they had been cultivating, and took refuge in the station. This step was rendered absolutely necessary, for the Indians were prowling in every direction, stealing horses, attacking the armed companies that passed from one station to another, and killing and scalping every unfortunate straggler that fell into their hands. The expedition under General George Rogers Clarke, in which the men of the Salt River settlement, burning for vengeance, participated, daunted them for a time, and restored quiet.

Not confining their operations to small predatory parties, upon the 9th of May, 1781, a band of one hundred and fifty Shawnees, or Shawanoes, made a desperate attack on M'Afee's station, about an hour before sunrise. As Indian skirmishes and bush-fighting have become too familiar topics to need description, I shall omit the details given in the MS. The inquisitive reader, however, will find a

short but graphic sketch of the preliminary skirmishing in Mr. McClung's highly interesting and elegantly written volume, entitled "Sketches of Western Adventure."* I shall content myself with supplying an incident or two out of the M'Afee MS. of which Mr. McClung has made no mention, and of which he was probably not aware.

A well-directed fire from the beleaguered garrison kept the marauders at bay, while the women and children were busily engaged in running bullets and carrying ammunition. Every man behaved with the utmost intrepidity, except one, whose name is suppressed by the historian, no doubt out of tenderness to his surviving relatives, and the blank is filled with the charitable words, "*Peace be to his ashes!*" This faint-hearted wretch crept under the bed and hid himself, until his wife, indignant at his pusillanimity, forced him out from his retreat. Baffled in their

* McClung's Sketches, p. 154.

attempt, the malignant savages destroyed all the cattle and hogs within their reach, and precipitately decamped. Had they remained ten minutes longer, they would have found themselves attacked in their rear by a reinforcement of forty men from Harrodsburgh, under Col. McGary, who had been summoned by an express on the first alarm. Finding the ground clear, they all immediately started in pursuit of the enemy, whom they overtook and completely routed. Thus ended a very remarkable adventure, in which thirteen men succeeded in repulsing a party of one hundred and fifty Indians. The narrator indeed says "*thirteen men*," but if through inadvertence he included *that thing* that was undeserving of the name of *man*, then the odds was still greater, only twelve men against one hundred and fifty. However, as the wife was undoubtedly the *best man* of the two, the complement may be made up by admitting her as a substitute.

The insecurity of the settlers, and the

hazards to which they were exposed about this period, appear to have been very great. There was no communication between the stations, of which there were now several, except by armed companies. The inhabitants, not daring to spend the night out of the forts, cultivated their corn during the day with the hoe in one hand and a gun in the other. A large party went one morning to a neighbouring plantation to assist in pulling flax, a friendly office always cheerfully tendered, but were unconsciously waylaid by eight or nine Indians. The wily savages, afraid to make an open attack, cut down bushes, and constructed a screen in a fit situation for an ambuscade, so that no one would be able to discover them till within a few yards. Behind this leafy screen they lay, watching for the return of their unsuspecting victims, and anticipating with savage eagerness the pleasure of scalping the whole party. But Providence ordered otherwise. One of the young men (John McCoun, Jr.) proposed to his companions,

on their way homeward, to deviate a little for the sake of gathering plums, a quantity of which grew at no great distance. As the sun was not yet down, they consented; and in consequence of this happy suggestion, they reached home by a more circuitous but safer route. We may imagine the mingled amazement and delight with which they discovered next day what an escape they had had from imminent danger. The deserted blind, and the spot where the Indians lay, till their impatience and chagrin became insupportable, were objects of curiosity for several years. Surprise, however, was not the only emotion excited on this occasion; it is gratifying to be able to add, that a deep and salutary impression was made on the whole party, of the obligations under which they were placed to Providence for so signal a deliverance.

And it may be here mentioned to the credit of the M'Afees and M'Couns, that when a few years after they erected a rural church in their settlement, (the same

over which the venerable Dr. Cleland now presides,) mindful of the frequent interpositions of benignant Heaven in their favour, from the relief on the Alleghany mountains through the entire progress of their history, they gave it the appropriate name of *Providence* Church. Who can doubt that from this humble structure built of logs, this church in the woods, the hymn and the prayer went up, as acceptable to the ear of the Almighty, as though it had been one of those stately and elegant temples which have been reared in later years, attesting, if not the increased devotion, at least the increased wealth of the West.

The incursions of the savages gradually diminished from this period, as the country was more and more occupied by numerous emigrants, or *Long Knives*, as the Indians termed the whites. The M'Afee Station, like all the others, became a prominent centre of population, and was looked up to as one of the main props of the country. Grist-mills began now to be erected; improvements of all kinds were projected;

and uninterrupted prosperity finally crowned the enterprising pioneers. Having mentioned grist-mills, it may not be amiss to relate, out of the MS., how their grain had been ground hitherto. Hand-mills were in use, of a primitive and almost oriental character, consisting of a pair of slabs of limestone, about two feet in diameter, which were placed in a hollow tree, generally sycamore or gum; and every morning each family ground as much as would supply them for the day.

Here we shall take leave of the M'Afee Company. Their hardships, enterprise, perils, and success, of which we have given a sketch, may be assumed to be a fair specimen of what fell to the lot of the other adventurers who entered Kentucky at the same period, and through whose persevering efforts the forest and the cane-brake soon disappeared before the axe and the plough.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the early settlers were a melancholy and unhappy set of men. On the con-

trary, this wild sylvan life had surprising charms ; its independence was agreeable, and habit made its excitement necessary. Many social conveniences they gave up ; quiet and ease were unknown ; appalling perils environed them ; and they saw many a friend and kinsman laid low by bloody deaths : yet so far from being dispirited, or renouncing the wilderness in disgust, their spirits rebounded with greater elasticity, and a cheerful fortitude never deserted them. A moment's reflection will prevent our being surprised that this was the case ; familiarity with danger lessens its terrors, and the heaviest misfortunes are often those which are borne with the greatest firmness. Certain it is, that their impressions, whether devout or sorrowful, were but transient in their duration ; and even when shut up in the narrow limits of their forts, they were not without their jovial recreations. While the old hunters discussed the exploits of some noted Indian fighter over a glass of grog, the young people spent the evening in carolling and

dancing, and all the festal hilarity their circumstances would admit.

Besides the inviting character of the new Hesperia, the easy terms on which land could be procured, gave an additional stimulus to emigration. The Virginia patents were of three classes; pre-emption rights, military grants, and warrants from the land-office.* The last were issued with inconsiderate profuseness; and although most of the valuable land was already taken up by the holders of the other patents, more warrants were in a short time issued, as Captain Imlay, himself a land commissioner, assures us, than would have covered half the territory within the limits of the district.† The natural consequence was land-jobbing, litigation, and heart-burnings between families for years.

“Our agriculture,” said the Hon. Chilton Allan in his address before the State Agricultural Society, “our agriculture was re-

* Filson, *ut supra*, p. 326.

† Imlay, note, p. 8.

tarded for thirty years in the adjustment of conflicting land-claims.”* The business of land-jobbing became a profitable source of speculation across the Atlantic, and the “Mercuries” of those days contained advertisements of immense tracts in America offered for sale. The plots were embellished with the greatest elegance; they had for corner trees specimens of those kinds only that are known to grow in the richest bottom-lands, and they were adorned with fine groves, meadows, water-courses, and mill-seats, “where,” Captain Imlay quaintly remarks, “perhaps there will not be a grain of corn for half a century to come.”† The devices of modern schemers may be found anticipated in the pages of this author, who has given engraved plans of several towns then projected, laid off with all the formal pomp of streets, and squares, and public buildings,

* Obs. and Rep. vol. vii. for 1838. See also Butler’s Hist. of Ky. p. 138.

† Imlay, note, p. 9.

which, unfortunately, to this day exist only on paper.

In spite of danger, distance, and fatigue, and all the discomforts incident to a new country, the tide continued to flow without an ebb. A curious paper is extant in Matthew Carey's American Museum for 1789,* in which the writer draws an elaborate comparison between the advantages of settling in Kentucky, and settling on the new lands towards the sources of the Delaware, Schuylkill, and Susquehanna rivers. Among the many disadvantages enumerated, he tells the reader that wheat is ten pence per bushel in Kentucky, and a blanket costs half a guinea. Of what advantage, he then asks, is a rich tract of land, if it takes the price of twenty bushels of wheat to buy a small coarse blanket, ten times the cost at which it could be procured in the quarter he so warmly recommends. But fruitless were all such dissuasives; the winds would have been better auditors. Nothing could stop the

* Amer. Mus. vol. v. p. 59.

current that was setting strongly and steadily westward.

Some scattered statistics of those times, gleaned from various sources, will give an idea of the rapidity with which Kentucky was peopled. The years 1779 and 1780, it was believed, brought twenty thousand persons into the district;* and in the latter year, three hundred families were said to have entered at a single point on the Ohio.† In 1784, not less than twelve thousand persons became residents.‡ In 1785, but ten years from the first stroke of the pick-axe at Boonsborough, the inhabitants were so numerous as to meet in convention with a view to a separate state organization.§ In 1790, the total population amounted to seventy-three thousand, six hundred and seventy-seven.|| In the single year 1794, fourteen thousand persons more were reported to have emigrated.¶ Originally a

* M'Afee's MS. Hist. p. 10. § Imlay, p. 17.

† Butler, c. vi. p. 99. || Butler, c. xiv. p. 241.

‡ Imlay, Lett. II. p. 16. ¶ Imlay, Lett. VII. p. 173.

part of Fincastle County, Virginia, Kentucky County was set off by itself in 1776, with a municipal court;* in 1780, it was erected into a *district*, embracing three counties, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Fayette;† and finally, Kentucky took her place as a *sovereign state*, and a member of the Union, June 1st, 1792;‡ only *seventeen* years from the first settlement of Boonsborough.

These extraordinary events did not take place, as is notorious, without opposition. Kentucky, inhabited by none of the Indian tribes, and exhibiting no traces of their villages, had been regarded as the common hunting-ground and battle-ground of all. Here the Cherokee of the south, and the Miami of the North resorted to pursue the chase, and often the buffalo visited the lick in safety, and the elk leaped upon the mountain, while the painted savages turned their deadly weapons against each other.§ The very name, Kentucky, or

* Butler, c. vi. p. 89.

† Butler, c. xii. p. 211.

‡ Butler, c. viii. p. 118.

§ Butler, c. i. p. 9.

Can-tuck-kee, pronounced with a strong emphasis, is said to owe its origin to the country having been the arena of frequent conflicts; being interpreted by some, *The Middle Ground*, but most commonly, *The Dark and Bloody Ground*.^{*} There are not wanting, however, those who derive the name from our principal river;† but this may be doubted, as the river was known by other names, being called in Donaldson's survey, the *Louisa*,‡ which appears to have been the English name; or as in the M'Afee MS. the *Levisa*;§ and by the Indians, the *Cuttawa*, as appears from Evans' map, and Wayne's treaty.|| Mr. Butler candidly acknowledges, that, with all the aid he could procure from persons familiar with the aboriginal languages, he was unable to trace the true etymology.¶

^{*} Filson, *ut supra*, p. 308. § M'Afee's MS. Hist. p. 4.

† Imlay, Lett. I. p. 6.

|| Butler, c. viii. p. 132.

‡ Hall, vol. i. p. 248.

¶ *Ib.*

However this may be, the forewarning of the old Cherokee chief was amply verified, when he said to Boone, as he took him by the hand at the signing of Henderson's deed, "Brother, we have given you a fine land, but I believe you will have much trouble in settling it."*

It is true, and it deserves to be recollected, that the whole territory was at various times fairly purchased of the Indians, and this over and over again; for the government of Virginia wisely pursued the policy of merging all adverse titles in her own, instead of contesting them. Thus the treaty of Fort Stanwix, negotiated by Sir William Johnson in 1768, between Great Britain and the Six Nations, or, as they are sometimes called, the Five Nations, embraced in its purchase all the lands lying between the Ohio and Kentucky rivers.† In 1770, Virginia resolved

* Boone's Acct. *ut supra*, p. 358.

† Imlay, p. 6. Hall, vol. i. p. 247. Filson, *ut supra*, p. 309.

to extinguish the title of the Cherokees in the Holston and Clinch settlements, as embraced within a line from six miles above Long Island on Holston river to the mouth of the Great Kenhawa. Colonel Donaldson, the surveyor, finding that an extensive and valuable tract would thus be cut off to the Indians, took the responsibility of making the Kentucky river the western boundary.* For this extension of the ceded territory, the Cherokees agreed to receive £2500 sterling, instead of the £500, of the original contract.† This purchase the Assembly of Virginia at first refused to confirm, but after awhile, becoming alarmed at Henderson's movements, they consented to pay the amount promised by Colonel Donaldson. Thus the northern half of Kentucky was twice paid for; although it may be a grave matter of doubt, whether either of the sellers, the Five Nations, or the Cherokees, had any valid title them-

* Filson, p. 309.

† Hall, vol. i. p. 248.

selves to the soil. As for the lands lying south of the Kentucky river, we have already seen that Colonel Henderson bought them in 1775, of the Cherokees, for the estimated value of £6000 specie, of which Virginia assumed the ownership in 1781, after reserving to him a grant of twelve miles square.*

Thus it is perfectly clear, that the domain of Kentucky, from the mouth of the Kenhawa to the mouth of Cumberland, including the lands on both sides of the intervening Kentucky river, was fairly purchased, and the Indian title completely extinguished. Whatever reproaches, therefore, may be launched against Indian spoliation, this State is clear of the wrong. Not a solitary wigwam was ever burned on her soil, nor a single red man expatriated by her encroachments; while the half-naked children of the forest gravely pretended to barter with the British, the

* Filson, p. 309.

Carolínians, and the Virginians, successively, for the purchase of lands, to not a foot of which had they any better title than the whites themselves.

Notwithstanding all these negotiations, the savages were incensed at seeing their beautiful hunting-grounds occupied by strangers; and nothing, it appears, vexed them more than the erection of buildings. They made perpetual inroads, and were extirpated only after repeated and desperate struggles.

The following anecdote will illustrate the precarious situation of the inhabitants, and the methods they were compelled to adopt for their protection. A person by the name of Cleaveland, who lived on one of the bends of the Kentucky, kept a dozen or twenty large bloodhounds on account of the Indians. As it was very hazardous for a stranger to venture among them, a ladder was planted against a tree at a convenient distance from the dwelling, and a horn was suspended from one of the

limbs. Every stranger must climb this ladder, and give a signal of his approach by winding the horn; when the pack were tied up, and he could enter in safety. The venerable Col. Payne, of Fayette, informed the writer, that being once on a visit to this individual, his life was placed in imminent danger. All the formalities had been observed, and the horn duly sounded, and the pack tied up, and the company seated at dinner; when one of the bloodhounds, that had either been absent or had slipped his fastenings, scented the intrusion of a stranger, and came bounding into the apartment with eyes of flame. The furious animal rushed past every one that stood in his way, and was just on the point of springing over the table at Col. Payne's throat, when the host, with great promptness and presence of mind, caught the animal in his arms, and held him till he could be chained. As the Indians had now ceased to be formidable, and the hounds gave more trouble than benefit,

the owner, after this occurrence, had them all put out of the way.

No border annals teem with more thrilling incidents and heroic exploits than those of the Kentucky hunters, of which Mr. M'Clung has collected a highly interesting volume. Their very name struck terror into the heart of the stoutest savage. Well did the soil earn the emphatic title by which it has been designated. And it may be added, as if the prosperity was engendered by the soil or the climate, it has not unfrequently since been characteristic of Kentucky to be the arena of personal, political, and ecclesiastical conflicts, more severely contested, and more intensely exciting, than any other part of the Union has witnessed.

Seldom has a country been peopled under circumstances so auspicious to the formation of a bold, independent, magnanimous character. With the exception of an inconsiderable number from North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and

other quarters, the great body of settlers was furnished by Virginia. Thus a homogeneous population sprung up, modified by none of those mixtures that entered into the composition of other States of the west, and presenting a favourable specimen of native American character. The movement, as a popular writer has happily styled it, was regarded rather as an *expansion* of the Old Dominion, than as the founding of a new colony.* It was only considered in the light of a removal from a settled to an unsettled section of their native State. Expatriation and emigration were ideas alike foreign from their thoughts. They cherished the feelings and the name of Virginians, and to this day their children are proud of such an extraction. A frank hospitality, a manly bearing, and an irrepressible love of adventure, are characteristics which unequivocally, as well now as formerly, indi-

* Hall, vol. ii. p. 94.

cate their parentage.* This remark is more applicable to the country than the towns; for there is something in the nature and operation of town life that makes one citizen very much a fac simile of another. It is to the rural districts in every country that a stranger must look for the original native manners of the inhabitants.

The military grants brought a number of gallant officers to Kentucky, who had served in the war of the revolution, many of whom were in easy circumstances, and whose superior education and intelligence, naturally caused them to be regarded as leaders and as models; and their influence, to which we must join the early introduction of female society, gave tone to the manners of the rising community, and prevented that rudeness to which the

* Imlay, Lett. VII. p. 170. Filson, p. 321. Flint's Ten Years' Recoll. Lett. IX. p. 63, 71. Hall, vol. ii. p. 96.

unchecked hunter-state would probably have led.*

The stirring nature of the times; the free discussion of momentous political questions; the frequent conventions of the people; and the being left to fight their own battles and mould their own institutions, without interference or co-operation from other quarters; generated an acuteness of intellect and a habit of independent thinking, that hesitate not to grapple with any difficulty upon any subject. The predominant characteristic of Western mind has thus come to be a high degree of activity; an activity that is incessantly restless about something whether good or evil, and if not about good, then about evil rather than not be busy; an activity that will take no opinion on trust, but vigorously examines every subject for itself; an activity that will brook no control; that must walk abroad chainless and

* Imlay, Lett. VII. p. 168, 170.

untrammelled ; that laughs at caution, and is a stranger to fear. The cry that peals along the western waters is its appropriate watchword. When once the steam is up, impatience frets at every moment's delay ; danger, prudence, calculation, are all forgotten ; " Go AHEAD !" is the general cry. While the impetuous impulse lasts, it carries every thing before it :

" It comes as the winds come,
When forests are rended ;
It comes as the waves come,
When navies are stranded."

Could this enthusiasm only be kept from subsiding, and the powerful engine regularly and perseveringly supplied with fuel, there is nothing that Western mind could not accomplish. One thing is undeniable ; whoever would make an impression upon the Kentuckians, *must strike while the iron is hot.*

Scions of a noble stock, reared in the storm, and sustained by their own vigour,

it is not surprising that their strength of character should give them a predominant influence among the younger colonies of the Great Valley. The men that scaled the Alleghanies were no common men; they were young or in the prime of life; of small education indeed, but robust, shrewd, and enterprising. Kentucky has been justly styled the Mother of the West.* Not only was she the State first settled; her sons have been every where foremost; and their easy confidence and native enthusiasm conduct them at once to eminence, while tardier spirits are balancing the chances of success. The distinguished author of the *Ten Years' Recollections*, whose extensive travels qualified him to judge, observed every where the traces of this empire over the habits, sentiments, and institutions of the West; and he assures us, that from the Falls of St. Anthony to the Gulf of Mexico, to have been born

* Flint's *Recoll.* Lett. X. p. 73. Butler, c. i. p. 17.

and reared in Kentucky, constituted a recommendation to the highest offices, as potent as the prescription claim which birth in Old Spain used to confer in her colonies.*

Such is the commanding position of the State, of whose early beginnings we have taken a retrospect. The seed planted with difficulty and watered with blood, has taken deep root in the prolific soil; it has shot forth its goodly branches, and filled the whole valley, and the hills on either hand are covered by its shadow. Cradled between the Alleghanies on the one hand and the Rocky Mountains on the other, lies a young giant, about to rise in the greatness of his strength, and wield ere long a tremendous and incalculable energy, raising the glory of the Republic to its proudest height, or trampling its dearest hopes beneath his ruthless strides.

That this is not a random statement, or

* Flint, *ut supra*.

an empty rhetorical flourish, will be evident from the accompanying statistical table. I am indebted to Joseph Ficklin, Esq. for this interesting document, which he was so kind as to draw up from memory at my request.

A LIST

OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS OF KENTUCKY, WHO HAVE
 FILLED HIGH AND RESPONSIBLE STATIONS UNDER THE
 UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, OR UNDER THE GOVERN-
 MENTS OF OTHER STATES OF THE UNION, KENTUCKY
 ITSELF BEING EXCLUDED.

GOVERNORS AND LIEUTENANT-GOVERNORS.

Names.	From whence.	Where stationed.
Mr. Tichener,	Bourbon Co.	Gov. of Ohio.
Ninian Edwards,	Logan Co.	Gov. of Illinois.
Benj. Howard,	Fayette Co.	Gov. of Missouri.
William Clarke,	Jefferson Co.	Gov. of Missouri.
John Pope,	Washington Co.	Gov. of Arkansas.
J. T. Mason, Jr.	Fayette Co.	Gov. of Michigan.
Joseph M. White,	Franklin Co.	Gov. of Florida.
Richard Call,	Logan Co.	Gov. of Florida.
Lilburn Boggs,	Fayette Co.	Gov. of Missouri.
John M'Lean,	Logan Co.	Gov. of Illinois.
Henry Dodge,	Jefferson Co.	Gov. of Wisconsin.
John Ray,	Boone Co.	Gov. of Indiana.
Mr. Carlin,	Nelson Co.	Gov. of Illinois.

Names.	From whence.	Where stationed.
John Dunklin,	Mercer Co.	Gov. of Missouri.
C. W. Bird,	Fayette Co.	Gov. N. W. Ter.
James Brown,	Lexington,	Lt. Gov. of Louisiana.
Robt. Crittenden,	Logan Co.	Acting Gov. Arkansas.
Mr. Step,	Scott Co.	Lt. Gov. Indiana.
Mr. Ewing,	Logan Co.	Lt. Gov. Illinois.
Mr. Hubbard,	Warren Co.	Lt. Gov. Illinois.
Ratliffe Boon,	Mercer Co.	Lt. Gov. Indiana.

AMBASSADORS, FOREIGN MINISTERS, ETC.

Henry Clay,	Lexington,	Min. Ex. to Ghent.
James Brown.	Lexington,	Min. to France.
Wm. T. Barry,	Lexington,	Min. to Spain.
James Shannon,	Lexington,	Chargé to Central Am.
N. Edwards,	Logan Co.	Min. to Mexico.
Thos. P. Moore,	Mercer Co.	Chargé to Bogota, S. A.
Robt. B. M'Afee,	Logan Co.	Chargé to Bogota.
Anthony Butler,	Logan Co.	Chargé to Mexico.
Peter W. Grayson,	Fayette Co.	Min. Pl. Texas to U. S.

VICE-PRESIDENT.

R. M. Johnson,	Scott Co.	Vice-President U. S.
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HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, AND OFFICERS U. S. GOVERNMENT.

John Breckenridge,	Fayette Co.	Att. Gen. U. S.
Henry Clay,	Lexington,	Sec. of State U. S.

Names.	From whence.	Where stationed.
Wm. T. Barry,	Lexington,	Post M. Gen. U. S.
Amos Kendall,	Franklin Co.	Post M. Gen. U. S.
Robert Johnson,	Franklin Co.	Assist. P. M. Gen. U. S.
James Boyle,	Russellville,	Maj. Gen. U. S. A.
Gen. Croghan,	Jefferson Co.	Maj. Gen. U. S. A.
Gen. Jesup,	Fayette Co.	Maj. Gen. U. S. A.
D. M'Reynolds,	Russellville,	Surg. Gen. U. S. N.
John M'Lean,	Mason Co.	Post M. Gen. U. S.

JUDGES U. S. OR OTHER HIGH COURTS.

John M'Lean,	Mason Co.	Supreme Court U. S.
C. W. Bird,	Fayette Co.	U. S. Judge, Ohio.
Judge Lewis,	Jessamine Co.	Sup. Ct. Louisiana.
Francis L. Turner,	Fayette Co.	Sup. Ct. Louisiana.
Joseph E. Davis,	Logan Co.	Sup. Ct. Mississippi.
E. Turner,	Fayette Co.	Sup. Ct. Mississippi.
Thomas P. Davis,	Madison Co.	U. S. Judge, Indiana.
B. Johnson,	Scott Co.	U. S. Judge, Arkansas.
N. Pope,	Jefferson Co.	U. S. Judge, Illinois.
Henry Humphreys,	Lexington,	Supreme Ct. Texas.

U. S. SENATORS.

Thomas Reed,	Mercer Co.	From Missouri.
James Brown,	Lexington,	From Louisiana.
John M'Lean,	Logan Co.	From Illinois.
Dr. Linn.	Jefferson Co.	From Missouri.

Names.	From whence.	Where stationed.
Mr. Robinson,	Scott Co.	From Illinois.
J. Norvell,	Lexington,	From Michigan.
(Not recollected,)	Jefferson Co.	From Missouri.

To the foregoing we may add, as bearing on the subject—

PRESIDENTS OF COLLEGES.

Robt. G. Wilson,	Mason Co.	Pr. Univ. Athens, O.
Robt. H. Bishop,	Lexington,	Pr. Univ. Oxford, O.
James Blythe,	Lexington,	Pr. S. Hanover C. Ia.
John P. Durbin,	Augusta,	Pr. Dickinson C. Pa.
David Nelson,	Danville,	Pr. Theol. Sem. Ill.
John Chamberlain,	Danville,	Pr. Oakland C. Miss.
William M'Guffie,	Paris,	Pr. Cincinnati C. O.

SUMMARY.

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The foregoing list does not profess to be complete ; and many names are doubtless omitted, through inadvertence, that deserve a place. As for representatives to Congress, military officers, clerks of courts, secretaries of state, and other State officers, postmasters, &c. &c. they are very numerous, but have been omitted as not sufficiently prominent. Enough has been presented to justify the strong language that has been used, and to show the widely extended influence wielded by the State of Kentucky. "The breed of noble bloods," it is believed, is not extinct ; and should further demands be made, it is not improbable that she may spare a few more of her gifted sons for the cabinet, the forum, the pulpit, the chair, or the camp.

Till lately Kentucky indulged the hope of adding another and still prouder honour to those she already bears, in giving a President to the Union. Of the disappointment of this expectation, or of its causes, this is not the place, nor are we the persons, to speak. Nevertheless, with-

out plucking a single laurel from another's brow, a passing tribute may be permitted to one whom Kentucky delights to honour, and whose name, not confined to his native shores, is known over the globe. The more gladly do I pay this tribute, because none can now suspect the slightest sinister design of political craft. Others, with even more than Persian prostration, may worship the rising sun; to me there is something inexpressibly more touching in the calm majesty of his setting orb. Memory recalls the hours once enlivened by his meridian blaze, and imparts to his retiring radiance a new and deeper interest.

It has been said that the Roman prince who lamented a lost day, "had been an emperor without his crown." It is a beautiful observation; but there is a saying of the American senator that is no less memorable, and which, I have no doubt, will be taught hereafter by mothers to their sons. It was uttered at a time when the Union was convulsed by an extremely

agitating question, and patriots trembled to think of the future. Meditating an important step at that critical juncture, this judicious statesman admitted a distinguished friend into his counsels. That gentleman very plainly suggested the unfavourable influence such a step might have on his political prospects. The answer was worthy of a noble Roman in Rome's best days. "I did not send for you to ask what might be the effect of the proposed movement on *my prospects*, but whether it was *right*. I HAD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN BE PRESIDENT."

The man who could breathe that sentiment, needs no pomp of titles to adorn his brow. No station, however exalted, could possibly reflect more honour upon him, than he would reflect upon it. His is a greatness independent of circumstances, towering above the competition of rank and place. By that memorable sentiment, he shows himself allied to the truly great of all ages and of all climes, those chosen spirits whom Providence occasionally, but

with sparing hand, gives to the world, as specimens of a sublime and magnanimous virtue.

Go then, illustrious man! claim kindred with that select fraternity of self-sacrificing and incorruptible statesmen, those great-souled few, who form the very *élite* of the generations of earth;—go, secure of justice at the hands of posterity, when the strife and emulations of the day shall have been forgotten. The measure 'of thy fame is full; thou hast risen above the point to which vulgar ambition aspires, and where its largest wishes are satisfied. Henceforth men shall speak of thee as they speak of the mighty dead; and own a magic beyond all titled pomp, in the simple and unadorned name of HENRY CLAY.

THE END.

